

Unbowed by Trump, Democrats charge ahead with investigations

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump warned Congress that investigations and legislation don't mix. But Speaker Nancy Pelosi said such threats have no place in the House, as unbowed Democrats charged ahead Wednesday with plans to probe Trump's tax returns, business and ties to Russia.

The chairman of the intelligence committee, Rep. Adam Schiff, announced a broad new investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election and Trump's foreign financial interests.

Other committees' actions are well underway.

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Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., walks with reporters to a Democratic Caucus meeting the morning after President Donald Trump's State of the Union speech, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019.

Associated Press



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Ivanka Trump unveils White House global women initiative

By CATHERINE LUCEY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ivanka Trump is unveiling an effort aimed at helping 50 million women in the developing world get ahead economically over the next six years.

On Thursday, the White House will officially launch the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, a government-wide project led by the senior adviser and daughter to President Donald Trump. The initiative will involve the State Department, the National Security Council and other agencies.

It aims to coordinate current programs and develop new ones to assist women in areas such as job training, financial support, and legal or regulatory reforms. The president previewed the launch during his State of the Union address Tuesday night, describing it as "part of our commitment to improving opportunity for women everywhere."

He will sign a national security memorandum to officially launch the initiative Thursday, framing it as a way to promote stability around the world.

Ivanka Trump, who will attend the Munich Security Conference next week to promote the project, stressed that she sees this as a national security priority. "We think women are arguably the most under-tapped resource in the developing world for accelerating economic growth and prosperity," she told The Associated Press.



Ivanka Trump, left, and Lara Trump arrive to hear President Donald Trump deliver his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019. Tiffany Trump is at bottom right.

The effort will draw on public and private resources, with the U.S. Agency for International Development initially setting up a \$50 million fund, using already-budgeted dollars.

As part of the launch, USAID and Pepsi Co. will announce a partnership aimed at women in India, and USAID and UPS will sign an agreement designed to help female entrepreneurs export goods.

Trump has twice tried unsuccessfully to slash USAID's budget by a third, and his

"America first" foreign policy has sought to limit the United States' role as an international leader.

But his daughter said this effort was in keeping with administration goals, arguing it was a strategic investment that promoted security.

"We're proud of our legacy of being a generous nation, looking to uplift others around the world.

But we want to do so in a fiscally responsible way," she said, promising "rigorous" efforts to track prog-

ress.

Among those she has consulted for the project is former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

The White House launch Thursday will feature a roundtable discussion and presidential signing ceremony.

Attendees were to include Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, national security adviser John Bolton, officials from USAID and UNICEF, elected officials and business leaders, as well as women who are the ben-

eficiaries of this type of aid. The initiative builds on previous White House efforts to help women internationally. The Obama administration established an Office of Global Women's Issues at the State Department and established an ambassador-at-large for global women's issues.

That position has been vacant since Trump took office — drawing criticism from some advocates — but the White House said it now has a candidate lined up for the job.

Since she joined the administration in early 2017, Ivanka Trump has focused on women's economic issues. She previously led an effort to launch a World Bank fund to help drive women's entrepreneurship.

And she recently advocated for the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act, which bolsters efforts focused on women by USAID.

Ivanka Trump said her hope is that this effort has staying power beyond the current administration.

Past global initiatives she has studied include the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, started under President George W. Bush in 2003.

"This is not an initiative that we think should stop at the culmination of the administration," she said.

"We think it's something that should sustain itself over time, and we're going to work really hard to show that this is a great use of foreign development assistance." □

Associated Press

Unbowed by Trump, Democrats charge ahead with investigations

Continued from Front

The day after the president essentially laid out the ultimatum to Congress during his State of the Union address, Democrats appeared even more resolved to conduct oversight of his administration and legislate on their priorities.

"The president should not bring threats to the floor of the House," Pelosi told reporters, rebuking Trump for saying during his address that the "ridiculous partisan investigations" must end because they could harm the economy.

Pelosi said Congress has a responsibility to provide oversight, under the Constitution's system of checks and balances, and would be "delinquent" if it failed to do so.

Schiff indicated his committee's investigation will be sweeping. It will include "the scope and scale" of Russian intervention in the 2016 presidential election, the "extent of any links and/or coordination" between Russians and Trump's associates, whether foreign actors have sought to hold leverage over Trump or his family and associates, and whether anyone has sought to obstruct any of the relevant investigations. "We're going to do our jobs, and the president needs to do his," Schiff said, noting the probe will go beyond Russia to include leverage by the Saudis "or anyone else."

Schiff said, "Our job involves making sure that the policy of the United States is being driven by the national interest, not by any financial entanglement, financial leverage or other form of compromise."

Trump immediately shot back, calling Schiff nothing but a "political hack" who has "no basis to do that."

"It's called presidential harassment," Trump said during an event at the White House as he announced his new pick to head the

World Bank.

After eight years in the minority, House Democrats are releasing their bottled-up legislative energy at a time when Trump's annual joint address to Congress lacked many new initiatives of his own.

The Democrats' agenda goes beyond oversight of Trump's administration and Russian election interference to the bread-and-butter issues of jobs, health care and the economy that propelled them to the House majority. Pelosi said they still hope to work with the White House on shared priorities, particularly on lowering prescription drug costs and investing in infrastructure.

On Wednesday, one House committee held a hearing on gun violence. Two others gaveled in to address climate change. And three more were debating protecting people with pre-existing medical conditions and the Affordable Care Act.

The Foreign Affairs Committee was debating the war in Yemen and a war powers resolution to halt U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led coalition.

Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, the chairman of the Oversight Committee, said Trump has to understand "that he has to be accountable."

"It's not about partisan investigations," said Cummings. "We all have to be accountable. And it's a new day."

The flurry of activity brought a turn of events for the new Congress. Democrats had been off to a rough start as the 35-day government shutdown jammed the agenda and stifled the energetic freshmen class that swept the party to power in the midterm election.

With the longest government closure over, for now, the new majority is eager to deliver on its promises before the next election shifts attention yet again.

Pelosi made a calculation

after the election to forego a traditional 100-days agenda — or the 100-hours to-do list she rolled out in 2007, the last time Democrats had the majority — in favor of a return to the legislative process.

It's partly a nod to the diverse Democratic majority, whose members hold different views on some issues. But it's also a part of Democrats' efforts to revive traditional governing, rather than lurching from crisis to crisis, as had become the norm when Republicans were unable to control their often unruly conservative flank. Under new House rules, every bill must pass through committee before coming to a vote on the floor.

James Curry, an associate professor of political science at the University of Utah, said Democrats have a short window to capture the public's attention. "They want to show voters they can legislate, they can run the government, they can do the things they said they're going to do," he said.

"Reality," Curry added, "is obviously more complicated than that."



House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., arrives to speak with reporters after his panel voted in a closed session to send more than 50 interview transcripts from its now-closed Russia investigation to special counsel Robert Mueller, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

Much of the House's legislation will fall flat in the Senate, where Republicans retain control. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is expected to ensure his chamber serves as a backstop to prevent Democratic bills from landing on Trump's desk — although the Senate's own bipartisan investigation into Russian election interference continues.

The more likely result is that the legislative agenda sets the stage for the next election, in 2020, when voters will be assessing not only the performance of the new House majority but also which party they pre-

fer in the White House.

This month, Democrats expect to pass H.R. 1, a sweeping reform of campaign finance and voting rights laws, and then turn to legislation to expand background checks for sales and transfers of firearms.

At the Natural Resources Committee, overflow crowds of schoolkids, environmental activists and others turned out for the first of what Chairman Raul Grijalva promises will be a month of hearings on the effect of climate change on coastal communities, national parks and other areas under the committee's oversight. □

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House Democrats getting down to the grunt work of governing

By **LISA MASCARO**
AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — A House committee will hold its first hearing on gun violence in years. Two others will gavel in to address climate change. And three more will debate protecting pre-existing health conditions and the Affordable Care Act. That's before noon on Wednesday.

After eight years in the minority, House Democrats are about to uncork their bottled-up legislative energy. The agenda goes beyond oversight of President Donald Trump's administration and Russian election interference to the bread-and-butter issues of jobs, health care and the economy. Far from the House floor, the grunt work of governing will play out in the confines of the committee rooms, on the day after Trump's State of the Union address.

"We have a lot of work to do," said Rep. Katherine Clark, D-Mass., a member of party leadership. House Democrats got off to a rough start in the new Congress as the 35-day government shutdown jammed the agenda, frustrating some lawmakers and halting the energetic freshmen class that swept to power in the midterm election.

With the longest government closure over, for now, the new House majority is eager to deliver on its promises before the next election shifts attention yet again. Speaker Nancy Pelosi made a calculation after the midterm election to forego a traditional 100-days agenda — or the 100-hours to

do list she rolled out in 2007, the last time Democrats had the majority — in favor

can run the government, they can do the things they said they're going to do,"

the White House. This month, Democrats expect to pass H.R. 1, a



In this April 14, 2018 file photo, a man wears an unloaded pistol during a pro gun-rights rally in Austin, Texas.

Associated Press

of a return to the legislative process.

It's partly a nod to the diverse majority whose members hold different views on some issues. But it's also a part of Democrats' efforts to revive traditional governing, rather than lurching from crisis to crisis, as had become the norm when Republicans were unable to control their often unruly conservative flank. Under new House rules, every bill must pass through committee before coming to a vote on the floor.

They may not want to put it this way, but House Democrats are trying to make Congress great again.

James Curry, an associate professor of political science at the University of Utah, said Democrats have a short window to capture the public's attention. "They want to show voters they can legislate, they

he said.

"Reality," Curry added, "is obviously more complicated than that."

Much of the House's legislative product will fall flat in the Senate, where Republicans retain majority control, and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is expected to ensure his chamber serves as a backstop to prevent Democratic bills from landing on Trump's desk.

In some ways, the prospect of divided government frees up Democrats to simply pass the bills they prefer, without much interest in the bipartisanship that would be needed for Trump to sign them into law.

The more likely result is that the legislative agenda sets the stage for the next election, in 2020, when voters will be assessing not only the performance of the new majority but also which party they prefer in

sweeping reform of campaign finance and voting rights laws, and then turn to legislation to expand background checks for sales and transfers of firearms.

In announcing the first gun-violence hearing for the House Judiciary Committee in at least eight years, Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., said that "for far too long, Republicans in Congress have offered moments of silence instead of action in the wake of gun tragedies. That era is over." Several committees have posted videos ahead of their hearings in movie-like trailers to the coming action.

Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona, the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, promised a month of hearings on climate change — the first sustained look at the topic for his panel since 2009.

"What we have not seen from this committee in a decade-plus is attention to climate change," Grijalva said, alongside video clips of Trump calling climate change a "hoax." "On the contrary. We've seen a pattern of denial."

As other lawmakers, including some newly elected freshmen, join on screen, Grijalva says, "Now we're at a point with this new majority that that is going to change."

The Foreign Affairs Committee will debate the war in Yemen, and consider a war powers resolution to halt U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led coalition.

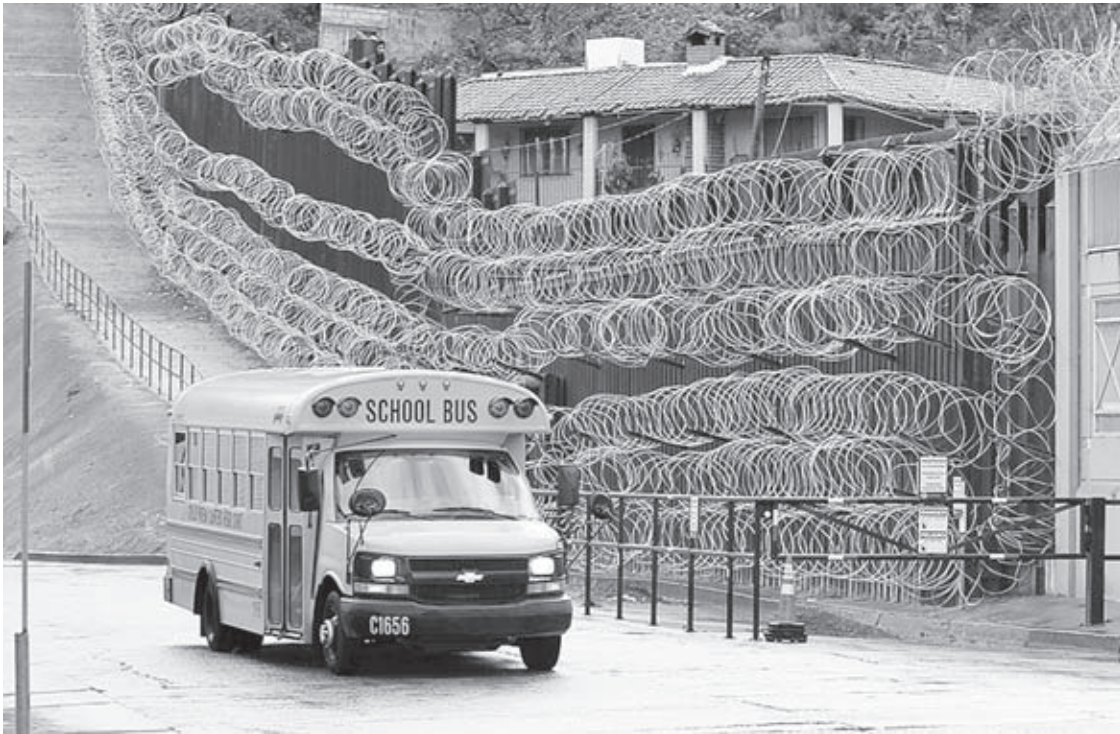
The Energy and Commerce Committee is among several panels delving into health care and also climate change. The Oversight Committee will hold a hearing Wednesday on ethics in the executive branch. And the Appropriations Committee will hold a hearing taking stock of the recent government shutdown.

Next week's agenda is shaping up to be almost as full.

Pelosi said in a letter to colleagues this week that the committees are "moving forward." She noted that 18 freshmen have been named chairs of subcommittees. The last time Democrats welcomed such a big class of freshmen, the Watergate class of 1974, no freshmen had such assignments.

Curry said the robust committee strategy serves a purpose for leaders, too. "Why not open the process up a little bit and let everybody express themselves?" he said. "It's a nice way to give everybody something to do." □

Arizona city officials decry new razor wire on border wall



In this Monday, Feb. 4, 2019 photo, a school bus rolls past the concertina wire-covered fence at East International and Nelson Streets in downtown Nogales, Ariz.

NOGALES, Ariz. (AP) — Officials in a small Arizona border city are decrying the installation of new razor wire that now covers the entirety of a tall border wall through downtown.

The city council in Nogales, which sits on the border with Nogales, Mexico, is set to consider a proclamation Wednesday night condemning the use of concertina wire. It follows reports that U.S. military troops installed more horizontal layers of the wire along the downtown border fence over the weekend.

The vote also comes one day after President Donald Trump made his case to the American people about the need for a border wall to protect the nation and how he has ordered 3,750 troops to prepare for what he called a "tremendous

onslaught."

Concertina wire has become the most visible sign of Trump's deployment of thousands of troops to the border amid anxieties about a Central American caravan around the time of the midterm elections. Soldiers have installed concertina wire at or near several official crossings, or ports of entry, at the U.S.-Mexico border.

In late November, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the military had sent 36 miles (58 kilometers) of concertina wire for use in California, Arizona, and Texas. At the start of November, soldiers in Texas installed lines of wire coils below a major bridge near McAllen, Texas, along the U.S. side of the border.

Photos published by the Nogales International show six rows of concertina wire

stacked along the approximately two-story wall.

Nogales, a city of about 20,000 people, is a fraction of the size of the Mexican city, but its economy is largely reliant on Mexican shoppers and cross-border trade. Illegal crossings in that area have dropped steeply in the past several years. Mayor Arturo Garino told the paper that he asked U.S. Sen. Martha McSally to help the city have the wire removed during a visit to the border last month. "That wire is lethal, and I really don't know what they're thinking by putting it all the way down to the ground," he said Monday. Neither Garino nor a spokeswoman for McSally returned messages from The Associated

Press. U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Department of Defense also did not respond to inquiries about why additional wire was installed over the weekend.

City leaders were critical of military exercises at the border during the holiday season, saying they believed it scared shoppers during one of the busiest times of the year.

The proclamation the city council is scheduled to vote on says concertina wire is typically something found in battlefields, and that placing it along the entirety of the border fence is "not only irresponsible but inhuman."

In a tweet, U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva, a Democrat, called the additional wire a stunt by the Trump administration, which he said is "trying to create the perception of rampant lawlessness and crime."

Information released by the federal government shows the number of arrests by the Border Patrol is the lowest since the early 1970s, while the number of agents has more than doubled.

Over 1.6 million arrests were made by just about 9,200 agents nationwide in the 2000. But those figures tapered off as the government dramatically increased staffing and resources like more surveillance technology and tall, steel fencing. By last fiscal year, about 19,000 Border Patrol agents made 310,000 arrests. □

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Political crisis engulfs Virginia's top 3 elected officials

By **ALAN SUDERMAN**

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The political crisis in Virginia spun out of control Wednesday when the state's attorney general confessed to putting on blackface in the 1980s and a woman went public with detailed allegations of sexual assault against the lieutenant governor.

With Gov. Ralph Northam's career already hanging by a thread over a racist photo in his 1984 medical school yearbook, the day's developments threatened to take down all three of Virginia's top elected officials, all of them Democrats.

The twin blows began with Attorney General Mark Herring issuing a statement acknowledging he wore brown makeup and a wig in 1980 to look like a rapper during a party when he was a 19-year-old student at the University of Virginia.

Herring — who had previously called on Northam to resign and was planning to run for governor himself in 2021 — apologized for his "callous" behavior and said that the days ahead "will make it clear whether I can or should continue to serve." The 57-year-old Herring came clean after rumors about the existence of a blackface photo of him began circulating at the Capitol, though he made no mention of a picture Wednesday.

Then, within hours, Vanessa Tyson, the California woman whose sexual assault allegations against Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax surfaced earlier this week, put out a detailed statement saying Fairfax forced her to perform oral sex on him in a hotel room in 2004 during the Democratic National Convention in Boston.

The Associated Press typically does not identify those who say they were sexually assaulted, but Tyson issued the statement in her name. Tyson, a 42-year-old political scientist who is on a fellowship at Stanford University and specializes in the political discourse of sexual

assault, said, "I have no political motive. I am a proud Democrat."

"Mr. Fairfax has tried to

called on Fairfax to resign, saying, "Her story is horrifying, compelling and clear as day — and we believe

Trump, and has moved to within striking distance of a majority in both houses. At the same time, the Dem-

sible for Northam to lead the state. On Wednesday, though, Herring confessed that he and two friends



In this Jan. 12, 2018 file photo, Virginia Gov.-elect, Lt. Gov Ralph Northam, center, walks down the reviewing stand with Lt. Gov.-elect, Justin Fairfax, right, and Attorney General Mark Herring at the Capitol in Richmond, Va.

Associated Press

brand me as a liar to a national audience, in service to his political ambitions, and has threatened litigation," she said. "Given his false assertions, I'm compelled to make clear what happened."

Fairfax — who is in line to become governor if Northam resigns — has repeatedly denied her allegations, saying that the encounter was consensual and that he is the victim of a strategically timed political smear.

"At no time did she express to me any discomfort or concern about our interactions, neither during that encounter, nor during the months following it, when she stayed in touch with me, nor the past 15 years," he said in a statement.

Tyson said she suffered "deep humiliation and shame" and stayed quiet about the allegations as she pursued her career, but by late 2017, as the #MeToo movement took shape and after she saw a news article about Fairfax's campaign, she took her story to The Washington Post, which decided months later not to publish a story.

The National Organization for Women immediately

her."

The string of scandals that began when the yearbook picture came to light last Friday could have a domino effect on Virginia state government: If Northam and Fairfax fall, Herring would be next in line to become governor. After Herring comes House Speaker Kirk Cox, a conservative Republican.

At the Capitol, lawmakers were dumbstruck over the day's fast-breaking developments, with Democratic Sen. Barbara Favola saying, "I have to take a breath and think about this. This is moving way too quickly." GOP House Majority Leader Todd Gilbert said it would be "reckless" to comment. "There's just too much flying around," he said.

The chairman of the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus, Del. Lamont Bagby, said, "We've got a lot to digest." Democrats have expressed fear that the uproar over the governor could jeopardize their chances of taking control of the GOP-dominated Virginia legislature this year. The party made big gains in 2017, in part because of a backlash against President Donald

ocrats nationally have taken a hard line against misconduct in their ranks because women and minorities are a vital part of their base and because they want to be able to criticize Trump's behavior without looking hypocritical.

Northam has come under pressure from nearly the entire Democratic establishment to resign after the discovery of a photo on his profile page in the Eastern Virginia Medical School yearbook of someone in blackface standing next to a person in a Ku Klux Klan hood and robe.

The governor admitted at first that he was in the photo without saying which costume he was wearing, then denied it a day later. But he acknowledged he once used shoe polish to blacken his face and look like Michael Jackson at a dance contest in Texas in 1984, when he was in the Army.

Herring came down hard on Northam when the yearbook photo surfaced, condemning it as "indefensible," "profoundly offensive" and "shocking and deeply disappointing." He said it was no longer pos-

sible for Northam to lead the state. On Wednesday, though, Herring confessed that he and two friends dressed up to look like rappers they listened to, including Kurtis Blow, admitting: "It sounds ridiculous even now writing it." He said he was "deeply, deeply sorry."

"That conduct clearly shows that, as a young man, I had a callous and inexcusable lack of awareness and insensitivity to the pain my behavior could inflict on others," he said. But he added: "This conduct is in no way reflective of the man I have become in the nearly 40 years since."

Herring, who was elected to his second four-year term in 2017, made a name for himself nationally by playing a central role in bringing gay marriage to Virginia.

When he first took office, he announced he would no longer defend the state's ban on same-sex marriage, saying it was time for Virginia "to be on the right side of history." A federal judge overturned the ban, citing Herring's opposition, and Virginia began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in 2014, nearly a full year before the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage nationwide. □



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Conviction upheld for woman who urged boyfriend's suicide

By **ALANNA DURKIN RICHER**
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A young woman who as a teenager encouraged her boyfriend through dozens of text messages to kill himself is responsible for his suicide, Massachusetts' highest court ruled Wednesday in upholding her involuntary manslaughter conviction. The Supreme Judicial Court said in a unanimous decision in the novel case that Michelle Carter's actions caused Conrad Roy III to die in a truck filled with toxic gas in a deserted parking lot nearly five years ago. "After she convinced him to get back into the carbon monoxide filled truck, she did absolutely nothing to help him: she did not call for help or tell him to

get out of the truck as she listened to him choke and die," Justice Scott Kafker wrote. Carter's lawyers said in an email they are disappointed in the ruling and will consider appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court, among other legal options. Carter, now 22, was sentenced to 15 months in jail, but has remained free while she pursues her appeals.

"Today's decision stretches the law to assign blame for a tragedy that was not a crime. It has very troubling implications, for free speech, due process, and the exercise of prosecutorial discretion, that should concern us all," said Attorney Daniel Marx, who argued the case before the high court.

A spokesman for the Bristol County District Attorney's office said it will file a motion in the coming days asking the trial court to impose Carter's jail sentence now that the state high court has ruled. "This case is a tragedy for all of the people impacted by this case," District Attorney Thomas Quinn III said in a statement.

"However, as the court found in two separate decisions, her conduct was wanton and reckless, and caused the death of Conrad Roy," he said.

Carter and Roy both lived in Massachusetts but met in Florida in 2012 while both were on vacation with their families. Their relationship consisted mainly of texting and other electronic com-



In this June 8, 2017 file photo, Michelle Carter sits in Taunton District Court in Taunton, Mass.

Associated Press

munications. Both teens struggled with depression. Carter had also been treated for anorexia, and Roy had made earlier suicide attempts.

Carter was 17 when Roy, 18, took his own life in Fairhaven, a town on Massachusetts' south coast in July 2014. Her case raised thorny legal questions about free speech and

provided a disturbing look at teenage depression and suicide. "I thought you wanted to do this. The time is right and you're ready — just do it babe," Carter wrote in one message. "You're finally going to be happy in heaven. No more pain. It's okay to be scared and it's normal. I mean, you're about to die," she wrote in another. □

Gas line explosion in San Francisco sets buildings on fire



San Francisco firefighters battle a fire on Geary Boulevard in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

By **JANIE HAR**
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A gas explosion in a San Francisco neighborhood shot flames high into the air Wednesday and was burning four buildings as utility crews scrambled to shut off the flow of gas. Construction workers cut a natural gas line, San Francisco Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White said. Authorities initially said five of them were missing, but the entire construction crew was found safe, and no other injuries were reported.

Hayes-White said several

buildings in the area were evacuated, including a medical clinic and several apartment buildings. Firefighters worked to keep the fire from spreading while Pacific Gas & Electric crews have been trying for more than an hour to shut off the natural gas line.

"It's complicated," Hayes-White said of stopping the flow of gas through the damaged pipe.

PG&E, which is under heightened scrutiny over its gas pipelines, didn't immediately return a phone call seeking comment.

A U.S. judge fined the na-

tion's largest utility \$3 million for a conviction on six felony charges of failing to properly maintain a natural gas pipeline that exploded under a neighborhood south of San Francisco in 2010. The explosion killed eight people and wiped out a neighborhood in suburban San Bruno. California regulators also fined PG&E \$1.6 billion, and the utility remains under a federal judge's watch in that case. Wednesday's fire began shortly after 1 p.m., apparently by crews working on fiber-optic wires, Hayes-White said. □

EU chief ponders 'special place in hell' for some Brexiteers

By **LORNE COOK**

JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Council President Donald Tusk took a swipe Wednesday at some Brexit-backers in Britain, wondering aloud what "special place in hell" might be reserved for those who had no idea how to deliver the country's exit from the European Union. With less than two months to go until Britain is due to leave the EU and concern mounting about a potentially chaotic departure, Tusk, who chairs meetings of EU leaders, also appeared to dash any British hopes that the bloc would reopen discussions over the Brexit deal that was overwhelmingly rejected by U.K. lawmakers last month. "I have been wondering what a special place in hell looks like for those who promoted Brexit without even a sketch of plan how to carry it out safely," Tusk told reporters after talks with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar.

As the men shook hands, Varadkar told Tusk "they will give you terrible trouble in the British press" over the comments — which, as predicted, drew outrage from British Brexiteers. House of Commons Leader Andrea Leadsom, a pro-Brexit Conservative, said Tusk's remark was "pretty unacceptable and pretty disgraceful. ... it totally demeans him."

Sammy Wilson of Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party tweeted that Tusk was a "devilish euro



Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, left, shakes hands with European Council President Donald Tusk before their talks at the Europa building in Brussels, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019.

maniac ... doing his best to keep the United Kingdom bound by the chains of EU bureaucracy and control." And former U.K. Independence Party leader Nigel Farage tweeted: "After Brexit we will be free of unelected, arrogant bullies like you and run our own country. Sounds more like heaven to me."

Britain is scheduled to leave the EU on March 29 — the first time a country has ever done so. British Prime Minister Theresa May is due in Brussels on Thursday with what she says is a parliamentary mandate to re-open the withdrawal agreement, sealed between the EU and her Conservative government in November after 18 months of intense, highly technical

negotiations.

It might be a fruitless visit.

"The EU 27 is not making any new offer," Tusk said Wednesday. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker agreed, saying the bloc "is not prepared to reopen the issue."

Tusk and Varadkar said EU nations were intensifying their preparations for a 'no-deal' British exit — a possibly disastrous development that could inflict heavy economic and political damage in the U.K. and the EU alike.

"A sense of responsibility also tells us to prepare for a possible fiasco," Tusk said. May's opponents, meanwhile, urged the government to delay Brexit, saying Britain is unprepared to

Associated Press

leave on March 29. Labour Party foreign policy spokeswoman Emily Thornberry said such a postponement would allow "time to see whether the negotiations succeed or, if they do not, to pursue a different plan." "We have a government treading water in the Niagara River while the current is taking us over the falls," she told lawmakers in the House of Commons. Britain's Parliament voted down May's Brexit deal last month, largely because of concerns about a provision for the border between the U.K.'s Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland. The mechanism, known as the backstop, is a safeguard that would keep the U.K. in a customs union with the EU to remove the need for

checks along the Irish border until a permanent new trading relationship is in place.

The border area was a flashpoint during decades of conflict in Northern Ireland, and the free flow of people and goods across the frontier underpins the peace agreement of 1998. But many pro-Brexit British lawmakers fear the backstop will trap Britain in regulatory lockstep with the EU, while May's political allies in Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party say it imposes barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K.

In search of elusive unity, May met Wednesday with the DUP, which insists the backstop must be scrapped, and with other Northern Ireland parties who insist it must stay.

There was little sign that any compromises were in sight. "The prime minister has come here empty-handed, with the same old rhetoric, with no plan, no credibility, frankly no honor," said Mary Lou McDonald, president of the Irish nationalist party Sinn Féin.

McDonald said the backstop "is the bottom line" for keeping the border open. The EU, which has long regarded the Irish border as the thorniest issue in Brexit talks, is also adamant that the backstop can't be removed. Tusk's appearance alongside Varadkar was the latest signal that the bloc will not abandon Ireland, which fears both the economic and political impact of a hard border. □



Lyndsay Burtonshaw, center, one of the 'Stansted 15' talks to the media outside Chelmsford Crown Court in Essex, England, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

UK protesters spared jail over bid to stop deportation plane

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Fifteen protesters who locked themselves together around a plane at London's Stansted Airport to stop migrants from being deported were spared prison sentences on Wednesday.

The demonstrators cut through the airport's perimeter fence on March 28,

2017, then used expanding foam, scaffolding poles and lock-box devices to secure themselves to the wheel and wing of a Boeing 767. The plane had been chartered by the government to repatriate passengers to Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. The 15 activists were found guilty in December of

breaching aviation security law after a prosecutor said they had put the "safety of the airport in a likelihood of danger."

Judge Christopher Morgan told the group Wednesday that there could have been "catastrophic effects" if any debris had been left on the runway from the March 2017 protest. □

Macron claws back support amid focus on yellow vest movement

By SYLVIE CORBET
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron appears to be clawing back support as he tries to quell the yellow vest protest movement with a national political debate.

Recent polls by Ifop, BVA and Harris Interactive institutes show Macron's approval ratings rising — from 23 to 31 percent in December to 31 to 35 percent.

But Macron knows the rebound could be fragile, saying recently he feels like he's "walking on ice."

Macron's popularity reached its lowest level after the anti-government, yellow vest protests broke out in November — with many demonstrators calling for his resignation. The protests reached their peak in early December when the French capital was scene to rioting, shops and museums closed and graffiti was sprayed over the Arc de Triomphe monument. The fear of further violence became so acute that Macron's wife, Brigitte Macron, and some presidential aides visited the nuclear-proof bunker, the location of which remains secret, French newspaper



In this Feb. 4, 2019 file photo, French President Emmanuel Macron speaks during a meeting with mayors and local association members as part of the "national debate", in Evry-Courcouronnes, south of Paris.

Le Journal du Dimanche recently revealed in a report called "the ten days when Emmanuel Macron trembled."

Macron has since announced a package of measures worth about 10 billion euros (\$11.4 billion) to boost workers' and retirees' purchasing power and launched a "grand debate" to let ordinary French people express their views on the country's economic

and democratic issues.

"These were first steps that enabled some people to be a bit less opposed to Macron, even if there was no enthusiasm about the measures," said Edouard Lecerf, deputy general director of the BVA polling institute.

The three-month nationwide consultation launched in mid-January involves a series of meetings organized by citizens,

groups and elected officials as well as an internet website where people can air their grievances.

Over the last three weeks, Macron has travelled across France to take part in several debates. Rolling-up his shirt sleeves, standing in the middle of crowds of hundreds, he repeatedly answered dozens of questions for six to seven straight hours, often broadcast live on French news channels.

Associated Press

Lecerf noted that "the grand debate now takes almost as much place as the yellow vests in the French media."

Frederic Dabi, deputy director general of Ifop, said the combination of emergency measures and the grand debate "give the impression that he's back in the game, and in the context of protests he appears as a protection against instability." Macron is also meeting this week with France's main party, including Wednesday with far-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon and head of far-right National Rally, Marine Le Pen. The French leader promised the grand debate outcomes will influence his domestic and European policies. But he insisted planned reforms, including an overhaul of the indebted pension system and of France's relatively generous unemployment benefits, are maintained. During a debate in Bourg de Peage, a small town in southeastern France, a man wearing a yellow jacket asked Macron to call new parliamentary elections. He refused, saying he "has been elected by the people." □

Lebanon names 1st female Arab minister in charge of security

By SARAH EL DEEB
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's new interior minister assumed her post Wednesday, becoming her country's and the Arab world's first female official in charge of powerful security agencies.

Raya El Hassan welcomed the challenge, saying Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri put his trust in her and gave her "this big responsibility."

"As the first female minister of interior, I have to prove the woman's ability to assume an exceptional portfolio," she said at the handover ceremony from her predecessor who had been in the post for five years.

El Hassan, who holds a Masters' degree from George



Newly appointed Interior Minister Raya El Hassan listens to former Lebanese Interior Minister Nohad Machnouk, at the interior ministry in Beirut, Lebanon, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

Washington University and is a member of Hariri's Future Movement Party, is one of four women in the 30-member Cabinet — a record for female political representation in Lebanon. El Hassan is used to head-

lines. She chaired one of Lebanon's major private public partnerships designed to develop the port city of Tripoli and in 2009, she became the first Arab woman finance minister — a post she kept for two

years. As interior minister, she will be in charge of multiple, often competing security agencies, and of maintaining stability in a country that has grappled with militant groups and limited spillover from the war in neighboring Syria.

El Hassan said her priorities are to improve cooperation between agencies, uphold human rights and improve Lebanon's notorious traffic problems.

"I will seek to have my own very special touch," building on the work done before me, she added.

Lebanon has been making an effort to improve representation of women in politics. In last year's parliamentary election, the first in nine years, six women were elected to the 128-seat parliament, up from four in

the previous chamber.

Hariri's party also named Violette Safadi as state minister and she successfully campaigned to promptly rename her post from the ministry from women's affairs to ministry for "women and youth empowerment." The post was previously held by a man.

May Chidiac, who lost her arm and leg in an assassination attempt in a 2005 bombing, was named state minister for administrative development by the Christian Lebanese Forces group.

Nada Bustani, named energy and water minister, tweeted on Tuesday: "A big part of the national economic plans is the responsibility of this ministry and we hope we are up to it." □

Cornered in Syria, IS lays groundwork for a new insurgency

By SARAH EL DEEB
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The Islamic State gunmen came out of hiding in the middle of the night and set up a checkpoint on a rural road in eastern Syria. For several hours, they stopped those passing and searched through their mobile phones to check their allegiances, until they vanished again into the desert.

One young man, an education worker, got through the checkpoint safely. But when he got to his destination in the next village, the threat was waiting for him. An IS loyalist told him: Don't remove pro-IS graffiti from school walls or you will pay the price.

The incident, one of many similar ones in past weeks, sent a bigger message — the Islamic State group may have lost almost all its territory, but it hasn't left. The group's once-sprawling caliphate has been reduced to a remote scrap of land in Syria's eastern desert, where a few hundred battle-hardened fighters are making a final stand against U.S.-backed forces.

But in liberated areas across Syria and Iraq, sleeper cells are carrying out assassinations, setting up flying checkpoints and distributing fliers as they



This frame grab from video posted online Jan. 18, 2019, by supporters of the Islamic State group, purports to show a gun-mounted IS vehicle firing at members of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, in the eastern Syrian province of Deir el-Zour, Syria.

lay the groundwork for an insurgency that could gain strength as U.S. forces withdraw. President Donald Trump has vowed to withdraw American forces from Syria, saying the militants are all but defeated. "As we work with our allies to destroy the remnants of ISIS, it is time to give our brave warriors in Syria a warm welcome home," he said in his State of the Union address Tuesday, referring to the group by another acronym.

But his own Defense Department has warned that IS could stage a comeback

in Syria within six months to a year if the military and counterterrorism pressure on it is eased. Gen. Joseph Votel, the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, told a Senate committee Tuesday that battlefield gains can only be secured by "maintaining a vigilant offensive," saying IS still has "leaders, fighters, facilitators, resources and the profane ideology that fuels their efforts."

He estimated there are between 1,000 and 1,500 IS fighters in the small area they still control, but said others have "dispersed" and "gone to ground." Activists who closely follow the conflict in Syria already point to signs of a growing insurgency.

Rami Abdurrahman, the head of Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, says IS still has 4,000 to 5,000 fighters, many likely hiding out in desert caves and mountains.

The Observatory said the militants have assassinated more than 180 people since August, including commanders in the Syrian Democratic Forces, a U.S.-backed and Kurdish-led militia that drove the militants from much of northeastern Syria, and nearly 50 civilians working with them.

The campaign has unfolded across northern and eastern Syria, in areas

where the militants were defeated months or even years ago. An IS bombing attack last month killed four U.S. soldiers and contractors in Manbij — a town in northern Syria that was liberated in 2016.

In other areas, the group has adopted tactics that are less lethal but just as chilling. Fliers appeared in a village in Syria's oil-rich Deir el-Zour province last summer, warning residents that IS still controlled nearby oil fields and that "anyone found to steal from them... should only blame themselves." Other fliers sparked a mass desertion by local volunteers for the SDF.

"It was unclear what would happen to (IS) in the future, but I think the U.S. withdrawal in Syria increased the chances for an IS resurgence by manifold," said Hassan Hassan, an expert on IS who is originally from eastern Syria and is now a senior fellow at the Washington-based Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy.

IS could also stage a resurgence in neighboring Iraq, where the group originated and where it has operated in various forms going back to the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. The Islamic State of Iraq, a precursor, had been largely dismantled and held no territory when President Barack Obama withdrew American forces

in 2011. Three years later, IS seized vast swaths of northern and western Iraq in a matter of days.

Syria is less hospitable for IS. The group's brutality and foreign roots alienated many Syrians, and it faces competition from other Sunni insurgent groups, like the al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. But unlike Iraq, Syria has large, ungoverned areas opened up by the civil war. "Syria will remain in part a place where (IS) could retreat and hide because there is still space in Syria," Hassan said.

The extremists have a long history of exploiting security vacuums, and may find another one in the coming months as U.S. troops leave Syria. Turkey views the Kurdish forces in the SDF as an extension of the insurgency it is battling at home, and has vowed to launch a military offensive against them. President Bashar Assad, who also has forces in the area, has vowed to bring all of Syria's territory back under state control. An outbreak of fighting would sap forces from the struggle against IS and generate the kind of chaos in which the group thrives.

"Imagine what (could) happen if one third of Syria changes hands from one security apparatus to another," Hassan said.

The experience of the education worker who was warned not to remove graffiti was documented by Omar Abou Layla, a Europe-based activist who runs DeirEzzor24, a media collective that reports from eastern Syria.

He says IS loyalists have infiltrated the Kurdish-run administration, exploiting both local Arab resentment at Kurdish rule and the Kurds' eagerness to recruit Arab allies. He says his group has documented nearly 20 cases in which former IS civil servants have returned to their jobs. It has also documented a number of recent assassinations by IS, including the killing of an Arab SDF commander and a man who works in money transfers. □

Ukraine's exiled ex-president warns of possible vote rigging

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Ukraine's exiled former president, who was found guilty of fueling a deadly separatist conflict in the east, is warning of possible vote rigging in the country's upcoming presidential election. Ukrainians will vote March 31 to elect a new president. Former President Viktor Yanukovich fled the country in February 2014 following months of anti-government protests. Russia used his appeal to

send troops to Ukraine as a justification for annexing the Crimean peninsula. Yanukovich spoke to the press Wednesday in Moscow, breaking more than a year of silence.

He would not endorse any of the over 30 Ukrainian presidential candidates but accused President Petro Poroshenko of plotting vote rigging.

A Kiev court last month found Yanukovich guilty of treason and of helping Russia to annex Crimea. □



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Some uneasy as Central African Republic, rebels make peace

By HIPPOLYTE MARBOUA
Associated Press

BANGUI, Central African Republic (AP) — Central African Republic and 14 rebel groups signed a peace deal on Wednesday even as some expressed alarm about the possible suspension of prosecutions after five years of bloody conflict.

The agreement is the eighth since the fighting began in 2013 but the first to emerge from direct dialogue. The peace deal, negotiated in Sudan and known as the Khartoum Agreement, is said to incorporate representatives of armed groups in the government of one of the world's poorest nations.

"Certain compatriots have thought that the republic has abandoned them. I want to say to you all that I will spare no effort to make Central African Republic our common home," President Faustin Archange Touadera said at the signing in the capital, Bangui. Yet few appeared to be



In this Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2013 file photo, fighters from a Christian militia movement known as the "anti-balaka" display their makeshift weaponry in the village of Boubou, halfway between the towns of Bossangoa and Bouca, in the Central African Republic.

optimistic about bringing rebels into the government while honoring the families of their victims. The fighting has killed thousands, displaced hundreds of thousands and sent two people to the International Criminal Court. "We are shocked because we see our au-

thorities jubilant alongside our executioners," Yannick Nalimo, a journalist and blogger, told The Associated Press. "It does not put anyone at ease. The people do not want these people, who put the country down and stripped us bare, to come back and

manage the affairs of the state."

Details of the peace deal have not been publicly released. Officials had said that would happen after the signing but Wednesday's ceremony ended without it being read out in public.

Associated Press

Armed groups currently control around 80 percent of Central African Republic, and Touadera, in power since 2016, has struggled to stabilize the country as armed groups compete over lands rich in gold, diamonds and uranium.

The conflict began when predominantly Muslim Seleka rebels seized power in Bangui. Largely Christian anti-Balaka militias fought back. Rebels continue to carry out deadly attacks on displaced people's camps and other communities.

Brunon Hyacinthe Gbiefba, a human rights activist and observer at the peace talks, said he was most concerned with the fight against impunity. He took issue with a clause in the agreement that reportedly calls for the suspension of prosecutions of those accused of abuses during the conflict. "Everyone is accountable for the actions they have taken," Gbiefba told the AP, insisting on mandatory justice against perpetrators. □

Hopes high for concrete results from 2nd Kim-Trump summit

By HAU DINH
Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Governments across Asia on Wednesday expressed hope that a second summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Vietnam will produce concrete results that will lead to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Trump announced in his State of the Union address that the summit will take place Feb. 27-28.

A spokesman for South Korean President Moon Jae-in said South Korea hopes



In this June 12, 2018, file photo, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, left, and U.S. President Donald Trump shake hands prior to their meeting on Sentosa Island in Singapore.

Associated Press

the United States and North Korea will produce "more concrete and practical" agreements during the meeting. The leaders' first summit in Singapore last June ended with a vague promise by Kim to work toward denuclearization, without a concrete plan for how it would be implemented.

Japan, too, said it hopes the summit will be "meaningful" and lead to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga also raised the issue of Japanese citizens who were abducted

by North Korea in the 1970s and '80s, saying it remains "our most important issue" related to North Korea.

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said enforcing international sanctions against North Korea is important in conveying that "the world is equally committed" to its denuclearization.

"It's not an overnight process. It is a very significant process," she told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation from the Solomon Islands, where she was visiting. "It will require extensive negotiations with the regime." □

Migrant caravan detained in old factory, across from Texas

Associated Press

PIEDRAS NEGRAS, Mexico

(AP) — A caravan of 1,600 Central American migrants is surrounded by Mexican authorities in an old factory a short distance from Texas, where they hope to seek asylum but appear to have a faint chance.

The migrants arrived on buses Monday in Piedras Negras, Mexico, across the Rio Grande from Eagle Pass, Texas. The caravan is the first in recent months to head toward Texas instead of California.

President Donald Trump in his State of the Union speech Tuesday night accused Mexican cities of busing migrants to the border "to bring them up to our country in areas where there is little border protection." U.S. Customs and Border Protection has bolstered staffing and conducted exercises with officers in riot gear, and the Defense Department said Wednesday that it would send 250 soldiers to Eagle Pass in a support capacity. But the Mexican police and soldiers already have tight-



Members of a Central American family leave a shelter in Piedras Negras, Mexico, Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019.

ly controlled the factory where the migrants are being held. Migrants were not allowed to stay anywhere else.

The government of the northern border state of Coahuila said it organized 49 buses from the interior cities of Saltillo and Artega to ensure the migrants'

safety. Coahuila has long been plagued by the now-fragmented Zetas cartel as well as by cold weather.

"These types of caravans have been victims of organized crime groups that try to force the migrants to work for them," said Jose Maria Fraustro, the state's interior secretary.

Associated Press

The San Antonio Express-News reported that migrants who tried to climb a 12-foot (3.7-meter) fence Monday night and escape were pushed back.

Long lines were forming inside the factory of people applying for "humanitarian visas" to allow them to leave the enclosure but re-

main in Mexico, the newspaper reported.

Meanwhile, the factory's rooms have been turned into sleeping areas divided by age and gender, with blue foam mattresses, the Express-News said.

They may have to wait weeks, if not months, to request asylum. According to Mexican officials, customs officials in Eagle Pass process 12 to 15 applications a day.

A spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection did not immediately respond to a request to confirm those numbers, but asylum seekers across the U.S.-Mexico border report being turned away or forced to wait in informal queues to see a customs officer. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has started implementing a plan requiring all asylum seekers at the southern border to remain in Mexico. On the Texas side, a long line of law enforcement vehicles was guarding the U.S. side of the Rio Grande to catch anyone trying to cross illegally. □

Venezuela military barricades bridge in attempt to block aid

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO SCOTT SMITH

Associated Press

CUCUTA, Colombia (AP)

— The Venezuelan military has attempted to block humanitarian aid from entering the country by barricading a bridge at a key border crossing, Colombian officials said Wednesday.

The bridge was blocked a day prior by the Venezuelan National Guard with a fuel tanker, two cargo trailers and makeshift fencing near the border town of Cucuta in Colombia.

"It's a means of intimidation, but I don't think it will accomplish anything," said Alba Pereira of nonprofit Entre Dos Tierras. "It's convenient for them to let the country continue enduring this absurd crisis."

Roughly 40 countries around the world have backed opposition leader



An immigration official observes a fuel tanker, cargo trailers and makeshift fencing, used as barricades by Venezuelan authorities attempting to block humanitarian aid entering from Colombia on the Tienditas International Bridge that links the two countries as seen from the outskirts of Cucuta, Colombia, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019.

Juan Guaido, who says he's assumed presidential powers as head of the opposition-led National Assembly and hopes to oust President Nicolas Maduro and restore democracy to Venezuela.

Guaido said humanitarian

aid will begin flowing into the South American country despite Maduro's objections.

But a defiant Maduro maintains control of the military and calls the Guaido-led opposition a puppet of the United States, which he

says is seeking to colonize Venezuela and exploit its vast oil resources.

"We are not beggars," Maduro said this week in a speech to troops broadcast on state TV, adding that there is no humanitarian crisis.

Guaido has described the emergency shipments as a "test" for Venezuela's armed forces, which will have to choose if they allow the much needed aid to pass, or if they instead obey orders.

In his State of the Union address Tuesday night, U.S. President Donald Trump ratcheted up pressure on the embattled Maduro government, saying that the U.S. stands with the people of Venezuela in their "noble quest for freedom." "We condemn the brutality of the Maduro regime, whose socialist policies have turned that na-

tion from being the wealthiest in South America into a state of abject poverty and despair," Trump said.

The White House has announced that Colombian President Ivan Duque and First Lady Maria Juliana Ruiz Sandoval will visit on Feb. 13 to discuss pro-growth policies, terrorism and illicit narcotic networks, regional security partnerships and efforts to restore democracy in Venezuela.

Colombian Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo on Wednesday condemned any attempts to block aid from entering. "Committing such a crime would give even more reason for the unified countries to ask the International Criminal Court to investigate Maduro," Trujillo told reporters after another meeting with the head of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro. □

LOCAL



Tierra del Sol helps protecting Aruban Burrowing Owl

NOORD — The Aruban Burrowing owl is the national bird of Aruba and is a protected species but due to several circumstances these species are in danger of extinction. The Aruban Burrowing Owl feeds on insects and rodents which it typically hunts for from the ground, walking, hopping or running after it. In support of the protection of the Aruban Burrowing Owl Tierra Del Sol recently offered some space on their golf course to build some artificial nests for these wonderful creatures. Not long ago, a Shoco Family (2 Parents and 4 Chicks) was moved from the driving range to one of the nests on their golf course, thus providing them with a safer environment.

About the Aruban Owl

The owl is known on occasion to locate prey from a high perch and to catch prey with its feet. Much of



the life history of this subspecies is still unknown. Burrowing owls typically lay three to six eggs that are incubated for 28 days and hatch after 42 days. It is unclear if this also goes for the Aruban Burrowing Owl. Staff of the Parke Nacional Arikok are constantly monitoring the owl's population within the protected area. This park is also an important

refuge where the population can recover. They live in burrows on the ground in areas of cactus scrub and dry forest. It is an endemic sub-species of the burrowing owl that occurs only on Aruba. The Burrowing Owl is a buffy-colored, long-legged owl with large, yellow eyes. It is a rare small bird of prey of only twenty centimeters high.

This diurnal species can be seen sitting in open areas in small family groups, apparently unphased by the hot afternoon sun. Burrowing Owls are much loved by the native islanders. The little owl is endemic (*Athene cunicularia arubensis*) and only exists on Aruba. Special about the Aruba burrowing owl – also called rabbit owl – is that it hunts both during the day and at night, its diet consists of insects, small rodents, little lizards and small birds. Unfortunately the owl is being threatened by tourism and Boa Constrictors.

Estimation is that only 200 pairs of Owls exist in the Aruban nature. The people of Aruba are very proud of their Shoco and its picture predicted on many objects on the island, like banknotes and stamps. On the 23rd of January 2012 the 'Shoco' was pronounced national symbol of Aruba. □

Celebrate Love!

ORANJESTAD — Valentine's Day is the celebration of love, beauty and romantic mood between couples and/or friends. It is a festive day where you would like to emphasize the importance of this special person in your life. You can do this in many ways, by sending cards, flowers, gifts, presents or arranging a wonderful day/night out.

While enjoying your stay in Aruba you can make this day extra special by surprising your love with the help of Aruba Today. Despite the fact that we have wonderful dinner and gift options to choose from, advertised in our newspaper in the coming days up to February 14th, we can make this day even more special.

Surprise your loved one with a picture of her/him or both of you in Aruba Today, accompanied by your personal message. Imagine taking your vacation breakfast in the morning while going through the newspaper and all of a sudden you see YOU. This will make her or his day for sure.



What Do You Do?

Send your selected picture (high resolution JPEG) with short personal Valentine message (maximum 40 words) to email: linda.reijnders@cspnv.com LATEST Tuesday February 12.

What Will We Do?

We will put your picture and message in the local section of Aruba Today on Thursday February 14 in our printed newspaper and on our website and Facebook page.

Make her/him smile on this special day, do something different!

There is only one happiness in this life, to love and be loved. ... ~ George Sand □





Creative Islander

By Thaïs G. Franken

Discovering Culture and Creativity in the Aruban Education System

Maastricht – Cultural and Creative Industries as we have discussed over the past months have a tremendous opportunity of establishing thriving developments in diverse sectors for Aruba. However, this development should not only be encouraged, it should be taught. From a young age, we grow, go to school to develop speech skills, hearing skills, behavioral skills, thinking skills, but, how about our creative skills? In the words of Jean Piaget; the goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge but to CREATE the possibilities for a child to INVENT and DISCOVER, to create people who are capable of doing NEW things. Education has a primitive role in shaping our future society, in giving our children the tools to survive and thrive in the 21st century. In one of the first columns I brought forward a scientific fact that our brains are wired between two major sections; one the analytical side, the other a more creative side. Now, the entire discussion of bridging culture and creativity in the education system argues that BOTH sides of the brain should be stimulated.

The Aruban Context

Aruba like many other countries provides all levels of education, from the kindergarten all the way up to the University of Aruba. The Aruban education system is a unique case and now it is becoming more accommodating by becoming one of the first national multilingual educational systems in our region. In the last decades Aruba has introduced creative classes as part of the high school curriculum, where they can receive dance, arts and music classes for a minimum amount of hours a week. In my research, which I conducted in 2018, I noticed a lot of discrepancies in the space and materials there were in these schools. Certain schools had more privileges and teachers had more to work with than others. This unequal situation drastically influences the equal opportunities of our students to receive the same level of creative classes. This for sure has a lot to do with the fact that Aruba has a scarcity in teachers, and automatically that

Aruba has a financial constraint of subsidizing this extra investment in creative classes.

In Aruba, we have this popular Dutch saying that says “Jong geleerd, oud gedaan”, which means that when you teach a child from a young age, this will remain as they get older. So, the key message is; teach them young! What are the first things we learn when we are children? We learn how to paint, we learn to dress our dolls, we learn colors, we learn role playing, we use our imagination. We learn how to listen to music, and how to move to the beat. Even in our early days our creative side of the brain is the first to get stimulated. But as we get older, society determines that only the analytical side is important. We don't want unbalanced people in the society. Imagine that the talents you are born with, the talent you are meant to develop in life comes from the creative side of your brain, but your entire life you have been taught to only value the analytical side. What then? Or, you are gifted in the analytical side, but complementary aspects from the creative side have never

been exposed to you. What then?

How is it in Europe?

In the background story of the early beginnings of the CCI, we know that it all started to manifest in the United Kingdom (UK). The UK was one of the first countries to drastically change the entire spectrum of CCIs in the economic, cultural, social and educational affairs. Most policy became culture and creativity centered to foster more changes in the way people viewed culture and creativity. Europeans are usually known for being very cultured societies. Many of the most known artists come from these European countries, and the majority of their people have grown an appreciation for their art. People from other parts of the world travel to visit museums that contain their arts pieces.

The UK has been successful in bringing this shift in the society, that other countries such as Australia and other European countries have also adapted their education system in attempts to shape these children to attain more creative skills. Back in the day when the industrialization era was popular, the economy was seeing for handy people that could work and produce mass amounts at a time. Their opinion was not needed, their intelligence was not asked for, their talent was not interested in. But now, this has changed, so why has the way we teach our children not changed? Why is the importance fixed on how good they can memorize something, or how well they do on a test? I am not indicating that this system is broken, or that memorizing pieces of text is bad. What I am saying, is that creativity is EQUALLY as important in the times we are living in.



Continued on Page 15

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Discovering Culture and Creativity in the Aruban Education System

Continued from Page 14

An interesting case study was conducted in Scotland and research was done to understand the implications creativity and culture could have in their education system. In the Scottish example, "the main findings were that developing creativity in education produced benefits in terms of student motivation, enthusiasm and enjoyment. The students became more independent in their learning: "rather than being told; they became more resourceful and reflective. They became good at knowing what worked for them and what did not" (p.9, Scottish Executive, 2006). The level of independence children get from being able to develop ALL elements within themselves, will produce secure and confident people who know what they are good at. People who have stability on what their life could look like. People who know what their contribution to its society looks like.

Those are the kind of people we want.

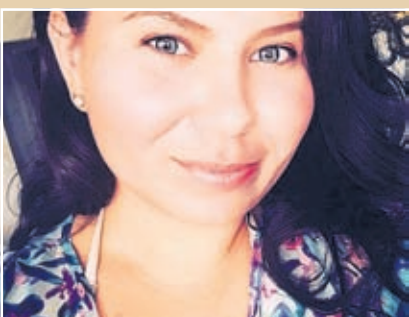
An essence of this report is the inclusion of the perspectives of the educators. The people who are responsible each day proving the tools for development. In the same Scottish report, it is concluded with teachers' comments on how future policy-making and practice should include. These were as follows:

- Creativity needs to be built in as a key feature of all areas of the curriculum;
- Creativity should be fostered at an early stage;
- There should be more definition of the meaning of creativity and examples of how to include it in all curricular areas;
- There should be less emphasis on what is being taught and more on how;
- Current assessment procedures need to be more flexible if creativity is to be fostered. More opportunities are needed for peer and self-assessment (p.10, Scottish Execu-

tive, 2006). It is clear that unlocking creativity in the school system has many implications on not only the way these children are being educated, but rather the material that could be available.

The Future?

Overall, the message today is that it has been proven many times that creativity and culture have important jobs in the shaping of our minds. It is not a question of one over the other, it is a question of offering BOTH options in the education system. Aruba, should prepare its children to have ALL the skills to be successful in the future, to innovate and bring Aruba to the next level. This will not only strengthen our society, but it will provide other markets (CCI), employment and could encourage the Aruban diaspora to come back and contribute to the Aruban society. It is only a matter of priority at this point. □



Biography – Currently, Thaïs Franken is a 22-year-old Aruban student at the University of Maastricht (UM). She is studying a Master of Science in Public Policy and Human Development in collaboration with the United Nations University (UNU). Back home, on the beautiful island of Aruba she completed her Bachelor of Arts in Organization, Governance & Management (OGM) at the University of Aruba (UA). She successfully graduated and defended her thesis titled "Placing Culture and Creativity at the Heart of the Aruban Sustainable Development" on July 6th 2018. Thaïs is very passionate about topics such as sustainability, innovation, culture and creativity. Next to her academic interests, she enjoys reading, writing, dancing and cooking.

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EAGLEBEACH - Lots of fun combined with admiration for creativity. Those are some of the ingredients of the signature event of Kiwanis Club of Aruba.

Everybody wants to see and be seen at the Kiwanis Annual Masquerade Party that takes place March 1st at the Renaissance Convention Center.

Now Tropicana Casino Aruba gives you the opportunity to play your way to the party, whether you can't get enough of the fun and excitement it



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If you want to be a winner, all you have to do is visit Tropicana Casino Aruba during the qualifying dates and opt in to be a part of the action.

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Celebration Time!



ORANJESTAD — Diamante Jewels & Time has been awarded the "shop-in-shop" store of the year 2018 by Pandora for the region of US and Caribbean.

Diamante Jewels & Time has been in business since 2000 and offers a variety of jewelry brands and watches such as Citizen, Seiko, Guess, Fossil, Skagen. They also offer a wide variety in diamond collections such as the Jillian's cut hearts and arrows, Ideal square hearts, Royal Star 85 faceted diamond. You will also find precious and semi-precious 14k and 18k gold jewelry. Looking for loose gems? They have Ruby, Emerald, Sapphires, Tanzanites and much more. In case you wish something more personal than do ask them for their 14k and 18k gold with diamonds custom made jewelry. Diamante Jewels & Time is located at L.G. Smith Blvd 100, Unit 6. Follow them on Facebook Diamante Jewels & Time or call them at 583-9921.



SPORTS



3-batter minimum, early trade deadline, DH changes proposed

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball and its players are discussing bold changes to spark the sport that include a three-batter minimum before a pitching change except at the start of an inning, a single trade deadline set before the All-Star break and expanded rosters. The union renewed its push to extend the designated hitter to the National League, suggested amateur draft incentives for winning records and penalties for losing records and proposed a change in service-time rules that would lead to faster free agency for top rookies held in the minor leagues early in the season. Management proposed expanding minimum time on the disabled list and optional assignments to the minor leagues to 15 days.

The talks are an expansion of the ones last offseason in which management threatened to implement a pitch clock, then backed off but did institute limits on mound visits without pitching changes. Management made its proposal on Jan. 14, the union responded last Friday and discussions are ongoing. Details were disclosed to The Associated Press by people familiar with the negotiations who spoke on condition of anonymity because no statements were authorized. Aspects of the proposals were first reported by The Athletic.

Continued on Page 23

NORTHERN FLIGHT



Kawhi dominant as Raptors beat 76ers

Toronto Raptors' Kawhi Leonard, center, goes for a shot against Philadelphia 76ers' Ben Simmons during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press
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New York Knicks center Enes Kanter, left, forward Mario Hezonja, center, and guard Damyean Dotson, right, watch the game action from the bench during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons, Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019, at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Associated Press

Forbes says Knicks most valuable NBA team, worth \$4B

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Knicks are worth \$4 billion, making them the most valuable NBA team for the fourth straight year, according to Forbes. That's despite having the worst record among the league's 30 teams. In its annual rankings, Forbes said the Knicks' value increased 11 percent from last year because of a \$1 billion renovation of Madison Square Garden, completed in 2013, that has produced a series of new revenue streams.

The Knicks, who feature a starting lineup with three new players acquired in the Kristaps Porzingis trade, lost at home Tuesday night for a franchise-record 15th straight game. They began Wednesday with a 10-43 record. Forbes says the Los Angeles Lakers remain in second place with a value of \$3.7 billion, up 12 percent. Rounding out the top five are the Golden State Warriors (\$3.5 billion), Chicago Bulls (\$2.9 billion) and Boston Celtics (\$2.8 billion). □

Game Winner among 362 horses eligible for Triple Crown



In this Nov. 2, 2018, file photo, Joel Rosario rides Game Winner to victory in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile horse race at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Unbeaten Game Winner, winner of the Breeders' Cup Juvenile and last year's 2-year-old champion, is among 362 3-year-old thoroughbreds made eligible during the early nomination period to compete in the Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont Stakes. Other top horses include Gunmetal Gray, Improb-

able, Knicks Go, Mucho Gusto and Tax. Four fillies and 20 horses based outside North America, including 11 from Europe, five from Dubai and four from Japan, also are among the early nominees for the Triple Crown series that opens with the Kentucky Derby on May 4. The Preakness is May 18 and the Belmont is June 8. □



Italy's Dominik Paris speeds down the course during the men's super-G at the alpine ski World Championships in Are, Sweden, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

Paris crowns stellar season with super-G title at worlds

By **ANDREW DAMPF**

AP Sports Writer

ARE, Sweden (AP) — Dominik Paris crowned what was already a stellar season by winning the super-G at the world championships on Wednesday.

Despite a few wild turns on the lower section of a technical course, the Italian finished 0.09 seconds ahead of Johan Clarey of France and Vincent Kriechmayr of Austria, who tied for silver.

Paris won the World Cup downhill in Bormio, Italy, and Kitzbuehel, Austria — considered the two toughest races on the circuit — over the last two months. He's had six World Cup podium results overall this season.

"It's really a magical year," Paris said.

Norwegian great Aksel Lund Svindal, who is retiring after the worlds, shrugged his arms after finishing 16th. A lot was expected from the Norwegian team on a course set by one of its coaches but Kjetil Jansrud, who is recovering from a broken hand, also struggled and placed 22nd.

"It turned out to be a much more difficult race than I expected," Svindal said. "The body feels good. I'm ready for another week and good for the downhill."

Paris' only previous medal at a worlds or Olympics was a silver in the downhill at the 2013 worlds in Schladming, Austria.

"He is the best guy in the world balancing the tactical side with the speed and the risk," Jansrud said of Paris. "This is a course where you need to have that ability to do that. He does that the best in the world, so

it's a fair and deserved win."

Paris was an early starter with the No. 3 bib and was shaking his head after crossing the finish. But his time stood up.

"I wasn't sure if I had done enough," Paris said. "I went full gas but I had to make some corrections toward the end, where I lost time and speed. Then it was a long wait to see if anyone was better than me." Clarey was faster than Paris through the first two checkpoints but couldn't match the Italian on the twisty lower section.

Olympic super-G champion Matthias Mayer was also faster through the second interval but then flew wide off a jump and missed a gate.

Kriechmayr trailed Paris by nearly a half-second midway down but nearly clawed it all back the rest of the way — drawing applause from Paris in the leader's spotlight. Clarey and Kriechmayr each earned their first major championship medals.

Clarey has five World Cup podium results — but no victories — while Kriechmayr has four wins, two of which came when he swept the speed events at last season's finals in Are.

Kriechmayr also won the famed Lauberhorn downhill in Wengen, Switzerland, last month.

Christof Innerhofer of Italy finished fourth and Adrien Theaux of France came fifth. The top American was Steven Nyman in eighth.

The race was run in partly cloudy conditions at minus-16 degrees C (3 degrees F). □

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McVay, Goff begin shaking off Rams' loss, focusing on future

By GREG BEACHAM

AP Sports Writer

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif.

(AP) — The Los Angeles Rams have plenty of off-season work to do. Thanks to their run to the Super Bowl, they have a relatively short amount of time to do it.

Sean McVay professes to love few things more than his next challenge, and the coach is already hitting the Rams' offseason tasks with extra motivation from the humbling experience of Los Angeles' 13-3 loss to the New England Patriots in Atlanta.

"If you can't handle getting gut-punched and responding, this business probably isn't for you," a typically energized McVay said Tuesday at the Rams' training complex. "That's the only way that I know how to respond as a coach. I know our coaching staff feels that way. I know our players feel that way, and that's what's powerful. ... If things are always easy, you never get a chance to get tested and find out."

McVay said he isn't ready for a vacation, and he already has a lengthy to-do list.

The Rams must replace quarterbacks coach Zac Taylor, who took over as head coach of the Cincinnati Bengals on Monday. McVay is heading to the NFL scouting combine in three weeks, and he will play a role in general manager Les Snead's numerous roster decisions to be made within the compressed timeframe of evaluation before free agency opens



Los Angeles Rams head coach Sean McVay speaks to reporters at the team's training camp Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019, in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

next month.

"When you do go this late into the season, which is certainly a blessing, we're really far behind with a lot of the things that typically take place," McVay said.

The NFC champions were mostly upbeat while they cleaned out their lockers Tuesday, but the Super Bowl defeat will take weeks to fade.

Andrew Whitworth is contemplating retirement, yet the left tackle was in the Rams' training complex working out on a bike within hours after the team returned home. Jared Goff had already watched film of the Super Bowl, taking a close look at his offense's numerous failings.

"It definitely stings," said Goff, who will have his fourth position coach in four seasons. "It's hard. You can't ever really get over it, maybe. It'll be tough, but

it'll be definitely something that will motivate us, and something that we'll use. It's hard saying this when we know, had we won, right now we would probably be in the parade, and how fun that would be, and how many different things go along with winning the Super Bowl. It's hard to put that in perspective, really, but there was a lot of good things that came out of this season."

With McVay and defensive coordinator Wade Phillips still leading a roster stacked with elite talent, the Rams appear to have a foundation for a prolonged stretch of championship contention. Veterans of the Rams' bad old days don't take this success for granted, even if the ending currently stings.

"This season is a truly great accomplishment by this team," left guard Rodger

Saffold said. "Sean McVay did an unbelievable job being able to turn this team around from a 4-12 team to a 13-3 team with a chance to win the Super Bowl. You can't ask for anything better than that. It hurts right now, but these guys are resilient. These guys show great poise. I expect everybody to come back and have another victorious season, whether it's with me or without me." With that final phrase, Saffold underlined the uncertain nature of any NFL offseason. The stalwart offensive lineman is among several Rams whose futures are undecided.

Defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh, edge rusher Dante Fowler and safety Lamarcus Joyner all were not available Tuesday to discuss their futures as unrestricted free agents. Veterans with hefty salary cap

hits in the upcoming season include defensive tackle Michael Brockers, linebacker Mark Barron and cornerback Marcus Peters.

Suh's \$14 million contract is up, and the 32-year-old veteran gets to choose his career's direction again after he gambled on the Rams' prospects for providing his first career play-off success. Aaron Donald wants Suh back next to him, but while Suh appeared to thoroughly enjoy playing in LA, he probably could make bigger money elsewhere.

Fowler improved his stock with solid play after his mid-season arrival from Jacksonville. He wants to stay, but could be targeted with multiyear offers due to the valuable nature of his position.

Joyner played this season on the franchise tag, and the Rams' hesitance to give him a top-dollar, multiyear deal could be foreshadowing.

Cornerback Sam Shields played in every game after missing the past two seasons while recovering from repeated concussions. Shields said he "most definitely" wants to play football again next season.

"I beat all odds, and I feel like myself again," Shields said.

Running back C.J. Anderson provided an enormous late-season boost, and the Rams could be interested in keeping him longer than five games. Backup running back Malcolm Brown, whose injury led to Anderson's arrival, is also a free agent. □

Leonard, Lowry help Raptors beat Embiid, 76ers 119-107

By The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Kyle Lowry had 20 points amid reports that Toronto has offered him in a trade, and the Raptors held off the Philadelphia 76ers 119-107 on Tuesday night in a matchup between two of the Eastern Conference's top teams.

Kawhi Leonard scored 24 points and Serge Ibaka had 20 points and 10 rebounds to help Toronto overcome another big game for Joel Embiid. Embiid had 37 points and 13 rebounds for his league-leading 44th double-double. Ben Simmons scored 20 points for Philadelphia, and Jimmy Butler had 18.

Lowry seemed unfazed by a report from Sports Illustrated that Toronto had offered him to Memphis as part of a trade package for Mike Conley and Marc Gasol.

THUNDER 132, MAGIC 122

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Russell Westbrook posted his seventh straight triple-double, leading Oklahoma City to the win.

Westbrook finished with 16 points, 16 assists and 15 rebounds to match the longest triple-double streak of his career. It was his 20th of the season and No. 124 for his career.

Paul George scored 39 points to help the Thunder win for the eighth time in nine games. Dennis Schroder had 20 points.

Evan Fournier scored 25 points for the Magic, and Aaron Gordon added 18 points and 10 assists.

PACERS 136, LAKERS 94

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Bojan Bogdanovic scored 24 points and Indiana made 19 3-pointers while handing LeBron James the most lopsided loss of his career.

James' teams lost by 36 points twice previously.

Myles Turner had 22 points to help the Pacers pick up their third consecutive victory. Thaddeus Young finished with 12 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists.

James had 18 points, nine rebounds and seven assists in his second game back since injuring his groin on

Christmas Day. He didn't play in the fourth quarter.

GRIZZLIES 108, TIMBERWOLVES 106

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Mike Conley had 25 points and nine assists in possibly his last game for Memphis, and the Grizzlies beat the Timberwolves on Justin Holiday's two free throws with .1 seconds remaining.

Jaren Jackson Jr. added 23 points for Memphis, which won its second straight game. Ivan Rabb had a career-high 19 points to go along with 11 rebounds.

Karl-Anthony Town had 26 points and 18 rebounds for Minnesota, and Dario Saric finished with 22 points.

The Grizzlies could move Conley and veteran center Marc Gasol ahead of Thursday's trade deadline. Gasol was a late scratch.

CELTICS 103, CAVALIERS 96

CLEVELAND (AP) — Jayson Tatum scored 25 points, and Boston earned its fifth straight victory despite missing All-Star guard Kyrie Irving. A strained left hip prevented Irving from facing his former team, but the Celtics made up for his absence by getting 18 points from Gordon Hayward and 17 from Marcus Smart.

Rookie Collin Sexton scored 27 — but none in the fourth quarter — for the Cavs, who dropped to 3-20 since

Dec. 19. Alec Burks, who has been linked to recent trade talks, added 21 for Cleveland. Larry Nance Jr. had 11 points and 12 rebounds.

Celtics coach Brad Stevens said Irving, who is averaging a team-high 23.8 points per game, may return Thursday when Boston hosts LeBron James and the Lakers, hours after the NBA's trade deadline.

CLIPPERS 117, HORNETS 115

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Tobias Harris scored 34 points, including a running jumper with 4.3 seconds remaining, and the Clippers rallied from 20 points down to secure the road win.

Charlotte had a chance to tie or take the lead on its last possession, but Marvin Williams' 3-point attempt was short at the buzzer.

Lou Williams scored 31 points for the Clippers. Montrezl Harrell added 16 and Patrick Beverley had 15 points in Los Angeles' third road game in four days.

Kemba Walker scored 32 points and Jeremy Lamb added 22 for the Hornets.

It was the second time this season Charlotte lost a game after leading by 20.

PISTONS 105, KNICKS 92

NEW YORK (AP) — Blake Griffin scored 29 points, Andre Drummond had 17 points and 15 rebounds, and the Pistons handed the Knicks their 14th straight loss.

Reggie Bullock and Reggie Jackson each added 19 points for the Pistons.

Dennis Smith Jr., playing his second game for New York, led the Knicks with 25 points.

New York has dropped a team-record 15 straight at Madison Square Garden. The Knicks haven't won since Jan. 4 against the Lakers in Los Angeles. Their last win at MSG was a 136-134 overtime victory against Milwaukee on Dec. 1.

HEAT 118, TRAIL BLAZERS 108

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Hassan Whiteside had 28 points and 11 rebounds, and the Miami Heat snapped a three-game losing streak.

Dwyane Wade added 22 points and nine rebounds for the Heat in the first of a five-game road trip.

CJ McCollum had 33 points for the Trail Blazers, who had won three straight but were coming off a five-day layoff. The loss snapped an eight-game winning streak for Portland at home.

Miami led by 15 points heading into the final quarter but Portland rallied with a 9-2 run capped by Seth Curry's 3-pointer that pulled the Blazers to 96-88. Whiteside's basket and a pair of free throws from Johnson kept Miami in front 108-103, and the Heat were able to hold off the Blazers the rest of the way. □



Toronto Raptors' Kawhi Leonard, tries to slip past Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid, left, and Mike Muscala during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019, in Philadelphia. Toronto won 119-107.

Associated Press

76ers get Harris from Clippers in 6-player, 4-pick deal

By DAN GELSTON

AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Tobias Harris drove the lane, tossed up a runner and buried the winner in what turned out to be his final shot for the Los Angeles Clippers.

His packed bags needed a new destination. Next stop, Philadelphia.

The 26-year-old Harris is headed to the 76ers as part of a late-night deal that suddenly gives the team the best starting five in the Eastern Conference and stamped them as legitimate title contenders.

Harris is ready for the move — he tweeted early Wednesday a GIF from the opening credits of the 1990s sitcom "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" showing Will Smith's character playing basketball.

The Sixers can only hope this trade turns into a story all about how the East got flipped-turned upside down.

They paid a steep price for the free agent: Sensational rookie guard Landry Shamet and four draft picks are headed to the Clippers. Philadelphia traded forwards Wilson Chandler and Mike Muscala to Los Angeles, too.

The Sixers also acquired center Boban Marjanovic and forward Mike Scott as part of the deal.

Harris, playing for his fifth NBA team, is having a breakout season with the Clippers. He averages 20.9 points and shoots nearly 50 percent from 3-point range and is expected to start with All-Stars Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons, along with Jimmy Butler and JJ Redick, to form the best starting lineup this side of Golden State.

"We are in the unique position to contend now and we think this trade positions us well for the postseason," 76ers general manager Elton Brand said in a statement. "Tobias is one of the best 3-point shooters in the NBA and possesses an innate ability to impact the game on both ends of the floor, while Boban and Mike provide valuable skillsets,



Charlotte Hornets' Michael Kidd-Gilchrist, right, steals the ball from Los Angeles Clippers' Tobias Harris, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C., Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019.

size and depth to our team. All three players bring high character to our locker room and we are excited about their fit alongside Joel, Ben, Jimmy and our entire roster."

The Sixers suffered in the early years of "The Process" but are clearly in a win-now mode. Harris and Butler both will be free agents this summer and both could command a maximum-level contract.

The Sixers' four picks sent to the Clippers are their lottery-protected 2020 first-round pick, a 2021 first-round pick, a 2021 second-round pick and a 2023 second-round pick.

The Sixers, who were eliminated in the second round of the playoffs last season, are 34-20 and in fifth place in the Eastern Conference. The Clippers are 30-25 and have shed the salary needed to make them attractive for major free agents in the summer. They held the eighth seed in the West, but the trade seems to signal an intent on worrying little about this season and

building through free agency and the draft.

This could be the first of several major deals expected before the NBA trade deadline passes at 3 p.m. Eastern Thursday. Anthony Davis wants out of New Orleans, Memphis is shopping Mike Conley and longtime teammate Marc Gasol, and Toronto's Kyle Lowry is on the market.

Will East contenders Boston, Milwaukee and Toronto be just as aggressive at the deadline as the Sixers?

The Raptors sent reserve guard Malachi Richardson, a 2022 second-round pick and the draft rights to Turkish player Emir Preldzic to the Sixers on Wednesday for cash considerations. Richardson has appeared in 22 games for the Raptors this season, averaging 1.4 points per game. In 12 games with Toronto's G League affiliate, he averaged 20.8 points, 5.8 rebounds and 3.4 assists in 35.2 minutes.

And don't count out Brand making another bold move besides acquiring Harris.

Butler might be in the mix with the right offer and the Sixers are certainly listening to offers for any trade that involves 2017 No. 1 draft pick Markelle Fultz. Fultz has been rehabbing a bad shoulder and missed most of the season. Coach Brett Brown refused to commit before Tuesday's loss to Toronto that Fultz would be part of the playoff rotation. "I'm hoping to be pleasantly surprised with how he arrives back with us more than assume that he's going to be there," Brown said. "It's not smart for me to think like (he'll be a part of the rotation)."

Brand is going for it in his first season as GM, and the Sixers suddenly seem positioned as a legitimate title contender. Brand made the Butler and Harris trades without surrendering 2018 first-round pick Zhaire Smith. Harris, still not quite healed from a shoulder strain he suffered last week, made his final game with the Clippers a memorable one. He hit a running jumper in the lane with 4.3 seconds re-

maining to lead the Clippers past the Charlotte Hornets 117-115 on Tuesday night. Harris finished with 34 points.

"It's as good as it's going to be," Harris said of his injured shoulder. "It's not any better or worse. It's about pushing myself and battling through it, keeping my mental state at a high level to go into a game and be effective."

The 76ers play again Friday against Denver — and a retooled team can truly start its run toward a title. □

Associated Press



Bergeron scores 2 in 1,000th game, Bruins beat Islanders 3-1

By The Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Patrice Bergeron celebrated his 1,000th career game with a pair of goals as the Boston Bruins beat the New York Islanders 3-1 on Tuesday night.

Bergeron, just the fifth player in Bruins' history to play 1,000 games with the club, scored early in the second period and added an empty-netter in the final minute.

Peter Cehlarik also scored and Tuukka Rask stopped 28 shots for the Bruins, who handed the Metropolitan Division-leading Islanders their first regulation loss in more than three weeks.

Brad Marchand and David Pastrnak assisted on both of Bergeron's goals.

Jordan Eberle scored for the Islanders and Robin Lehner finished with 24 saves.

CAPITALS 3, CANUCKS 2

WASHINGTON (AP) — T.J. Oshie scored as part of a dominant performance, Braden Holtby made 30 saves and stopped a penalty shot, and Washington beat Vancouver in Jay Beagle's return to his old home arena.

Alex Ovechkin assisted on Oshie's 16th goal of the season to pick up his 1,180th career point and become NHL's career scoring leader among Russian players. Ovechkin went into the game tied atop that list with former teammate Sergei Fedorov.

Holtby made 13 saves and denied Bo Horvat on a penalty shot in a busy second period to help the struggling Capitals pick up two important points. Holtby was run over by Horvat prior to Elias Pettersson's goal with 7.6 seconds remaining and was attended to by a team athletic trainer before finishing the game.

Brett Connolly and Jakub Vrana scored third-period goals for the defending Stanley Cup champions, who had lost eight of their previous nine games.

SHARKS 3, JETS 2, OT

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Joe Pavelski scored a short-handed goal 2:49 into



New York Islanders goaltender Robin Lehner (40) drops to make a save against Boston Bruins center Patrice Bergeron (37) during third period of an NHL hockey game in Boston, Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019. The Bruins defeated the Islanders 3-1.

overtime to lead San Jose over Winnipeg.

Pavelski's 29th goal of the season came on a 2-on-1 with Brent Burns after a Winnipeg turnover, giving the Sharks a three-game winning streak to start off a four-game trip.

Logan Couture and Marcus Sorensen also scored for San Jose. Kevin Labanc had a pair of assists and Pavelski also had an assist. Martin Jones stopped 25 shots.

Blake Wheeler and Mathieu Perreault scored for the Jets, who had their three-game winning streak snapped and their run of seven consecutive victories at home ended. Connor Hellebuyck made 35 saves.

HURRICANES 4, PENGUINS 0

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Curtis McElhinney stopped 23 shots, Brett Pesce and Jordan Martinook scored from way out, and Michael Ferland and Andrei Svechnikov poured it on late as Carolina began a pivotal five-game trip with a victory over Pittsburgh.

McElhinney collected his first shutout of the season and ninth of his 11-year career by stuffing Jared McCann and Jake Guentzel with sprawling saves in the first period and never letting up as the Hurricanes picked up two big points

as they try to stay in the mix for their first playoff berth in nearly a decade.

Matt Murray made 28 saves for the Penguins but lost for the third time in four starts since the All-Star break. Pittsburgh struggled to generate any consistent offensive pressure against McElhinney while playing without injured star Evgeni Malkin, who missed his third consecutive game with an upper-body injury.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3, LIGHTNING 2, SO

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Alex Tuch scored the only goal in a shootout and Vegas halted a four-game losing streak with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Vegas got goals from Cody Eakin and Valentin Zykov in regulation. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 24 shots.

Brayden Point and Mathieu Joseph scored for the NHL-leading Lightning, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 35 saves. Steven Stamkos had two assists to give him 14 points over his last 10 games.

KINGS 5, DEVILS 1

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Tyler Toffoli scored twice in 35 seconds early in the third period to spark Los Angeles.

Toffoli, who had the overtime winner Monday against the Rangers,

helped send the Kings to their third win in four games. Adrian Kempe, Dion Phaneuf and Ilya Kovalchuk also scored for Los Angeles. Jack Campbell made 29 saves and Anze Kopitar had three assists.

Pavel Zacha scored for New Jersey, and Keith Kinkaid stopped 20 shots.

CANADIENS 4, DUCKS 1

MONTREAL (AP) — Brendan Gallagher had two goals and an assist, and Montreal beat slumping Anaheim.

Jesper Kotkaniemi and Phillip Danault also scored for the Canadiens, who improved to 7-1-1 in their last nine games. Jonathan Drouin had three assists. Carey Price made 24 saves for his sixth straight victory — his longest winning streak since the 2016-17 season.

Captain Ryan Getzlaf scored for the Ducks, who have lost five in a row. Chad Johnson stopped 28 shots.

PREDATORS 5, COYOTES 2

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Craig Smith, Filip Forsberg and Ryan Ellis scored in the second period, and Nashville beat Arizona to snap a three-game skid at home. Pekka Rinne made 24 saves as Nashville avoided being swept by Arizona this season, though the Coyotes did take the series 2-1.

Roman Josi scored an

empty-net goal with 2:50 left and had two assists, Calle Jarnkrok had a goal, and Ellis also had an assist.

SABRES 5, WILD 4, SO

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Sam Reinhart scored the lone shootout goal and Buffalo won for just the third time in nine games.

Reinhart also had a goal and an assist in regulation for the Sabres, who led by two in the second period before giving up Zach Parise's tying goal with 1:37 left in the third. Linus Ullmark stopped 41 shots through overtime in a game Buffalo never trailed.

Jack Eichel set up two goals and C.J. Smith also scored. Buffalo's once anemic power-play unit converted both opportunities on goals from Evan Rodrigues and Rasmus Dahlin.

BLACKHAWKS 6, OILERS 2

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP)

— Patrick Kane had a goal and an assist, and Chicago scored four goals in less than a three-minute span of the third period.

Erik Gustafsson, John Hayden, Dylan Strome, Drake Caggiula and Dominik Kahun also scored for the Blackhawks, who have won five straight. Cam Ward stopped 25 shots.

Leon Draisaitl scored both goals for Edmonton, which matched a season-high with its sixth-straight loss. Cam Talbot turned aside 23 of 27 shots before giving way to Mikko Koskinen, who made six saves.

BLUE JACKETS 6, AVALANCHE 3

DENVER (AP) — Josh Anderson scored the tiebreaking goal with 9:31 remaining, Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 27 shots and Columbus snapped a five-game skid by beating Colorado.

Pierre-Luc Dubois scored twice for Columbus, including an empty-netter. Oliver Bjorkstrand, Cam Atkinson and Alexander Wennberg also had goals.

Nikita Zadorov, Samuel Girard and defensemen Erik Johnson scored for Colorado, which dropped its fourth straight and fell to **3-12-2 since Dec. 21.**

3-batter minimum, early trade deadline, DH changes proposed

Continued from Page 17

Management is concerned about a drop in offense that saw strikeouts exceed hits for the first time last year and the big league batting average drop to its lowest level since 1972. In a season that included an unusually cold and wet April, average attendance dropped for the third straight season and fell below 30,000 for the first time since 2003.

Some of the most interesting changes appear likely to be put off until 2020 at the earliest.

RELIEF PITCHERS

Management proposed that a team not be allowed to bring in a reliever until the previous pitcher has faced three batters or an inning ends. There were 1,145 one-batter outings last season, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, up from 1,119 the previous year but down from 1,182 in 2016. The change would have an impact on the use of "openers" for a few batters, a move pioneered by Tampa Bay manager Kevin Cash and emulated by Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell in Game 5 of the NL Championship Series, when he removed left-handed starter Wade Miley after one batter and replaced him with right-hander Brandon Woodruff. Players countered the change should start in the minor leagues this year and reach the majors in 2020.

DESIGNATED HITTER

The DH has been used in the AL since 1973, but the NL has never adopted the rule and Commissioner Rob Manfred has said he supports the status quo. The union proposed the DH start being used in the NL this year, but management in the past has considered the DH an economic issue, and Manfred has said that economic changes must wait for negotiations for a new labor contract that would start ahead of the 2022 season.

PITCH CLOCKS

Management again has proposed a pitch clock, and the union countered



In this March 8, 2015, file photo, Seattle Mariners' J.A. Happ throws a pitch between innings as pitch clock counts down in the background during a spring training baseball game against the Cincinnati Reds in Goodyear, Ariz.

Associated Press

with limitations on its use.

MOUND VISITS WITHOUT PITCHING CHANGES

A limit of six began last season, and management wants to lower that to four this season and three in 2020. The union countered with five this year and, if the average time of a nine-inning game is longer this year than last, then four in 2020.

TRADE DEADLINE

Players proposed a single trade deadline be instituted before the All-Star break to keep teams from dealing veterans when the clubs conclude their chances of a playoff berth have dwindled. The deadline for trades without waivers was June 15 from 1923 through 1985 and has been July 31 since. Players who clear waivers can be dealt after the deadline, but they must be in an organization by Aug. 31 to be eligible for the postseason.

ROSTER SIZE

Many have criticized the roster rules, which generally allow a team 25 active players through Aug. 31 and then 40 until the end of the season. Management proposed allowing a 26-man roster, including a 12-pitcher maximum, through Aug. 31, and then

up to 28 for the rest of the season. The union countered that each team should be required to have 28 active from Sept. 1 on and that there be a supplemental roster of four players after the Triple-A post-season ends. No starting pitchers would be allowed on the supplemental roster, and at least two of the four would have to be position players.

ANTI-TANKING

Concerned that teams with small or no playoff chances put less of an emphasis on winning to get higher selections in the amateur draft, the union proposed that a team with 90 or more losses in consecutive years have its highest selection in the next amateur draft dropped 15 slots and lose \$2 million in international signing bonus pool allocation. A team with 90 or more losses in three straight years would drop 20 slots and lose \$3 million in allocation.

Clubs that reach the post-season would be awarded additional draft picks in the competitive balance rounds.

SERVICE TIME

A player in his debut season or with less than 30 days of major league service in

the previous season would be credited with a full year of major league service if he finishes among the top three in voting for Rookie of the Year, Cy Young Award, MVP or Rivera/Hoffman reliever award; he wins World Series or League Championship Series MVP; or he is among the top three in Wins Above Replacement, or WAR, defined by the average of the Fangraphs and Baseball Reference calculations. Currently, 172 days during the 186-day season are needed to be credited for a year of major league service. The Chicago Cubs called up Kris Bryant in 2015 to leave him with exactly 171 days, sparking a grievance that remains unresolved.

DISABLED LIST/OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

Management proposed that the shortest disabled list increase from 10 days to 15, its minimum before 2017, and the minimum time before an optioned player can be recalled from the minors also increase from 10 to 15 — keeping the exception that the limit does not apply when replacing a player who is placed on the DL. Concerned about service time, the union is not yet conformable with that plan.

TWO-SPORT ATHLETES

Worried baseball may lose athletes such as Oakland outfielder Kyle Murray, the Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback, players proposed two-sport athletes be able to sign major league contracts. Since 2012, all amateur free agents must sign minor league contracts.

STARTING EXTRA INNINGS WITH A RUNNER ON SECOND BASE

Players are generally amenable to management's proposal to start the 10th and subsequent innings of spring training games and the All-Star Game with a runner on second, although in the All-Star Game they want a player who already has left the game to be eligible to be one of those runners.

STUDY ON LOWERING

PITCHER'S MOUND

The pitcher's mound was dropped from 15 inches to 10 for the 1969 season, and management wants to establish a committee to study whether it should be lowered again. The union wants the committee to include active players.

INNINGS BREAKS

Players are willing discuss whether inning breaks can be shortened. Among the ideas suggested include using split screens that include commercials on broadcasts at the start of half-innings. □

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New app lets dog lovers swipe right for perfect pet match

By LIUDAS DAPKUS

Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — If the pooch melts your heart, swipe right.

Animal lovers in Lithuania have created a mobile application inspired by the popular dating app Tinder to match up dogs in local shelters with new owners.

Called GetPet, the app was launched last month and is getting hundreds of new users daily and already has made a few matches. It joins a growing market of apps for people looking to adopt a pet, including PawsLikeMe and BarkBuddy.

"It is like Tinder, but with dogs," said Vaidas Gecevicius, one of app's creators. "You can arrange a meeting with the dog — a date." GetPet features profiles of furry four-legged creatures



In this photo taken on Saturday, Feb. 2, 2019, Vaidas Gecevicius, who developed an app helping to match stray dogs with potential owners, poses for a picture with a dog and shows this dog's profile on the app in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Associated Press

looking up with soft, yearning eyes. Scrolling down reveals more information about the pup, and those interested can then swipe right.

But there are limits to the Tinder comparison. It's a one-sided situation and the dogs don't get to have a swiping experience. If you swipe left, another dog profile appears.

Gecevicius said the idea came to creators when they saw a stray dog on the street through the window during a computer workshop.

The app only features dogs for now but the plan is to eventually include cats and other animals.

Two friends, Emily and Elena, recently scanned the app and then visited the SOS Gyvunai shelter in Vilnius to meet Piff, a medium black-and-gray mongrel. They took him for a walk in a snow-covered park and said they would return soon to take him home.

"I think it's actually a very great idea because in Lithuania we have a lot of stray dogs and a lot of people who want to adopt," 24-year-old Elena said as dogs nearby ran around in outdoor cages barking. Ilona Reklaityte, the shelter's founder, said she is very happy about the innovative approach to an old problem.

"I really welcome this new app as it gives us more chances to find our pets new owners and a new home, and that means we can then help other dogs still on the streets," Reklaityte said.

"We have 140 dogs right now. Sometimes we give away one or two of them every day, but now we receive (many) more calls and people are coming more often." □

Apple's top retail exec to leave amid iPhone sales slowdown

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Apple's top retailing executive is stepping down amid a slowdown in iPhone sales that has raised doubts about the company's future growth prospects.

The shake-up announced Tuesday ends Angela Ahrendts' five-year stint overseeing Apple's 506 retail stores and e-commerce operations. She is being re-

placed by Deirdre O'Brien, a longtime Apple executive who also runs the company's human-resources department. Ahrendts will remain with Apple until April.

During her 30 years at Apple, O'Brien also helped gauge product demand. That issue has become a problem now that customers are holding onto their current iPhones longer instead of buying the latest

models. It's one reason Apple posted disappointing iPhone sales during the past holiday shopping season.

Although Apple sells iPhones and other products such as the iPad and Mac computer through a wide variety of merchants, its own elegantly designed stores have become a pivotal outlet, especially during the first few weeks after a new device hits the market.

"It was clear that Apple needed new strategies and a potential change on this front to catalyze demand in and outside the all-important retail stores," Wedbush Securities analyst Daniel Ives.

Apple didn't give a reason for Ahrendts' departure, saying only that she is leaving "for new personal and professional opportunities." Ahrendts, 58, joined Apple amid great fanfare in 2014 after CEO Tim Cook persuaded her to leave a glamorous job running the fashion brand Burberry.

To lure her away, Apple gave Ahrendts company stock valued at \$70 million in 2014. In her last full year at Apple, she received a compensation package valued at \$26.5 million, according to filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Ahrendts' arrival at the Cupertino, California, company coincided with the rollout of the Apple Watch, which the company designed to be a fashion statement in addition to a wearable piece of technology.

While at Apple, Ahrendts engineered renovations of high-profile stores in San Francisco, New York, Chicago and other cities in an attempt to transform them into hip places to hang out while shoppers checked out the company's latest innovations. Her lofty description of the stores as the equivalent of "town squares" became the subject of derision among some analysts and media commentators □



In this Thursday, May 19, 2016, file photo, Angela Ahrendts, Apple's senior vice president of Retail and Online Stores, speaks with reporters during a preview of the new Apple Union Square store in San Francisco.

Associated Press



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Report shows economic clout of Kentucky bourbon over decade

By **BRUCE SCHREINER**
Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — A decade ago, bourbon barons poured bottles of their precious amber liquid on the Kentucky Capitol steps to protest a looming tax hike. On Wednesday, industry officials stood with lawmakers to cheer another round of growth in the spirits sector.

The cause for celebration was a new study showing Kentucky bourbon flexing more economic clout as it matures, leading a distilled spirits industry that contributes \$8.6 billion annually to the state's economy. Its economic output increased 60 percent in the past decade in Kentucky, where most of the world's bourbon is crafted.

The sector also pointed to big increases in jobs, capital investment and tax revenue. "This is a monumental success story," Rick Robinson, chairman of the Kentucky Distillers' Association board of directors, said at the statehouse event Wednesday. Industry officials credited Kentucky lawmakers with speeding the momentum by setting a new policy course for the sector. The idea was that lowering the spirits industry's tax burden at a time when it was growing would increase the flow of tax revenue to the state.



In this Wednesday, April 8, 2009, file photo, bottles of bourbon are on display in a case at the Heaven Hill Bourbon Heritage Center in Bardstown, Ky.

Lawmakers followed through a few years ago by approving a credit to offset the cost of a tax on aging barrels of distilled spirits, effectively eliminating it for distillers. Distillers still pay the tax, and the money goes mainly to public education, but they get the money back through the tax credit. State leaders also eased regulations on the spirits industry.

Bill Samuels Jr., who retired after a long career as top executive at Maker's Mark, said the study reaffirmed that lawmakers who supported those policies "got it right."

Samuels, who took part in the anti-tax protest a decade ago, credited Senate President Robert Stivers with leading the effort for

tax and regulatory relief.

After the tax credit took effect, the industry ramped up its expansion, which "meant more people working, more distillation, more storage," said Stivers, R-Manchester.

It also stirred more tax revenue for government. The study showed that spirits production and consumption generate about \$235 million in annual tax revenue for state and local governments in Kentucky, up 88 percent from 2009. Kentucky distilleries are in the middle of a \$2.3 billion building boom.

About 8.1 million barrels of spirits were aging in Kentucky last year, up 61 percent from 10 years ago as more distilleries opened and existing ones boosted

production, the study said. Nearly 7.5 million of those barrels contain bourbon — the highest level since 1972. Distillers paid a record \$23 million in barrel taxes in 2018, more than double from a decade ago. House Speaker David Osborne said the tax and regulatory relief for the spirits industry was a "prime example" of how government should work with the private sector.

"It is an incredible testament to what business can do when government gets out of the way," said Osborne, R-Prospect.

Despite the industry's good times, American whiskey makers are facing headwinds from retaliatory tariffs slapped on their products in some markets, including the European Union, as a result of broader trade disputes between the U.S. and several other countries.

Distillers are concerned the tariffs "put continued growth at risk," Samuels said. The new study showed Kentucky exports of bourbon and other spirits topped \$450 million in 2017. The value of Kentucky spirits exports has tripled in 20 years. KDA officials noted that the industry-backed study didn't delve into the impact of tariffs, since it was based almost entirely on data available before tariffs were imposed. □

US trade deficit narrows in November

By **PAUL WISEMAN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. trade deficit fell 11.5 percent in November to the lowest level since June.

The Commerce Department said Wednesday the gap between what the United States sells and what it buys from other countries dropped to \$49.3 billion from a revised \$55.7 billion in October.

American exports fell 0.6 percent to \$209.9 billion, but imports fell faster, dropping 2.9 percent to \$259.2 billion.

The politically sensitive deficit with China in the trade of goods such as cars and cellphones fell 7.3 percent to \$35.4 billion.

President Donald Trump campaigned on a pledge to slash America's trade deficit with the rest of the world and has imposed import taxes on foreign steel, aluminum and Chinese products. But the January-November 2018 deficit was still up 9 percent from a year earlier.

America ran a \$71.6 billion deficit in the trade of goods, down from \$78.3 billion in October. □

Mutts



6 Chix



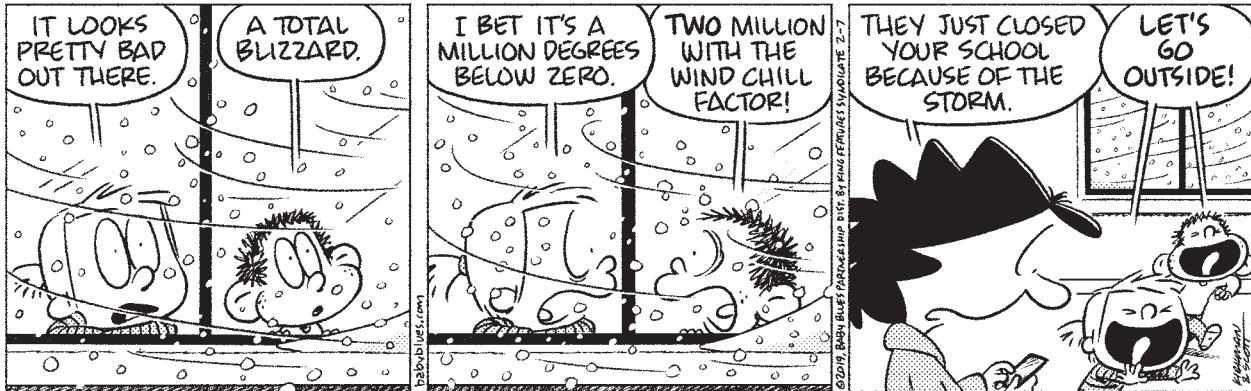
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | 3 | | | | | | 6 | |
| | 6 | 8 | 1 | | 7 | 4 | 2 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 5 | 4 | 8 | | 2 | 6 | 7 | |
| | 9 | | | | | | 1 | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | 3 |
| | | | 4 | 7 | 9 | | | |

Difficulty Level ★★★

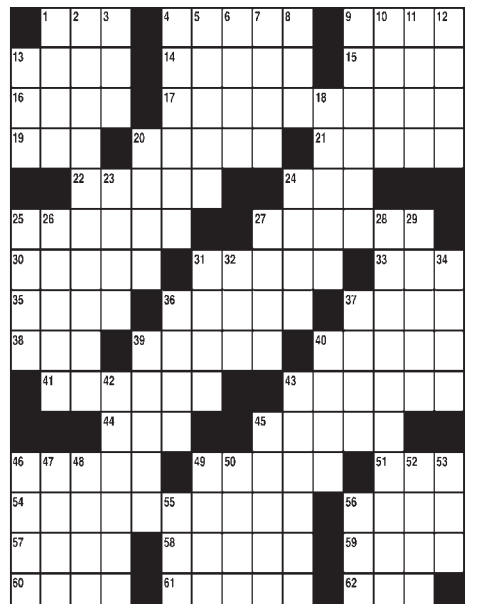
2/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| 5 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| 1 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 7 |
| 6 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 6 |
| 4 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 4 |
| 3 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| 9 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 3 |

ACROSS

- 1 Hairpiece
- 4 Acting award
- 9 New York team
- 13 Weathercock
- 14 Come in second
- 15 Most populous Hawaiian island
- 16 West or Sandler
- 17 Occurring shortly after giving birth
- 19 Facial twitch
- 20 Cowboy's shoes
- 21 Roper's rope
- 22 Necklace fastener
- 24 Sick
- 25 Black-and-blue mark
- 27 Man of the cloth
- 30 Is a breadwinner
- 31 Tremble
- 33 Embrace
- 35 "Get lost!"
- 36 Eyeglasses, for short
- 37 First word, often
- 38 ___ up; arrange
- 39 ___ from; besides
- 40 ___-miss; haphazard
- 41 Benumb
- 43 Singer Bobbie
- 44 Immature flower
- 45 Sudden forward rush
- 46 Kareem ___-Jabbar
- 49 Sheets of ice on the sea
- 51 Curved bone
- 54 Rowdy
- 56 TV's "What's My ___?"
- 57 At ___; immediately
- 58 Banquet
- 59 Suffix for confer or insist
- 60 Long-haired oxen
- 61 Trait transmitters
- 62 Turkish chief's title



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

2/7/19

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------|
| CLAP | ELMS | CAFE |
| LOCAL | LEAK | ADAY |
| UNCLE | DENIGRATE | |
| BEE | EW | PLUMES |
| | LOWER | PAS |
| ARENAS | SENORA | |
| CURLY | GOURD | ELK |
| TRAY | HEAPS | DELI |
| SAT | SEATS | TEXAS |
| LEANER | DELAYS | |
| | RED | REALM |
| HOSTEL | USS | ITS |
| INTERESTS | ERNIE | |
| DEER | SOOT | SHEET |
| ESPY | SWAY | ODDS |

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2/7/19

DOWN

- 1 Dry riverbed
- 2 Wrong
- 3 Onyx or sapphire
- 4 Set oneself against

- 5 Single-masted sailboat
- 6 Throw
- 7 Goes on stage
- 8 Elected official: abbr.
- 9 Self-esteem
- 10 Sups
- 11 Therefore
- 12 Japanese wrestling form
- 13 Dyer's tub
- 18 TV's "Kate & ___"
- 20 Male singing voice
- 23 Dryer residue
- 24 Aggravates
- 25 Elizabeth's nickname
- 26 Ran fast
- 27 Treaty
- 28 Breaking to bits
- 29 Abnormal growth
- 31 Spick-and-___
- 32 That girl
- 34 City in Indiana
- 36 Ran fast
- 37 Actress ___-Na Wen

- 39 Big person
- 40 Cluckers
- 42 Mistreats
- 43 Company
- 45 Contemptible person
- 46 Johnny Cash's "___ Named Sue"
- 47 ___ fide; genuine
- 48 Van Dyke or Van Patten
- 49 Unrestricted
- 50 Money lent
- 52 Peruvian Indian
- 53 Mayberry resident
- 55 CD followers
- 56 Pastureland

Classifieds

Halley Time Travel

Divi Village

1 BR WK # 8 & 9
21 & 25 weeks remain
\$9000 each
Divi links Golf
1 BR WK# 8 & 9
27 weeks remain
\$9000 each

Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR WK # 6
2 sd Floor Front Villas
28 weeks remain \$12,500
Studio WK # 7 \$7500
11 th Floor 17 week remain
1 BR WK # 8 \$16,000
building 6 4th floor
29 weeks remain

Renaissance Suites

1 BR WK # 9 \$9000
4th Floor Harbor view
1 BR WK # 11 \$8000
3rd Floor Garden view
1 BR Wk # 12 \$9000
3rd floor pool/ocean view
1 BR DLX Wk 13&14 \$9000
each
5th floor ocean front

Tropicana Resort

1 BR WK # 5,6,7,8
Ground floor \$7000 each
1 BR WK 7 & 8 \$7000 each
Dutch Village
1 BR WK 8 \$8500
24 weeks remain

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Studio WK #8 \$1500
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1 BR WK # 3
24 weeks remain \$ 8500
2 BR WK # 3
28 weeks remain \$ 25,000

Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK # 4 and 5
25 and 30 weeks remain \$ 9000
each
1 BR WK # 4
20 weeks remain \$9000

Divi Village

Studio WK # 6
22 weeks remain \$ 8000
The Mill Resorts and Suites
1 br wk # 4 \$7000

Marriott Surf Club

2 BR Garden Vie w \$14,000
2 BR Ocean View \$ 15,000
2 BR Ocean Side \$16,000
2 BR Ocean Front \$ 27,000
3 BR Ocean View \$26,000

Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR WK # 1,2,3
Building 6 4th Floor
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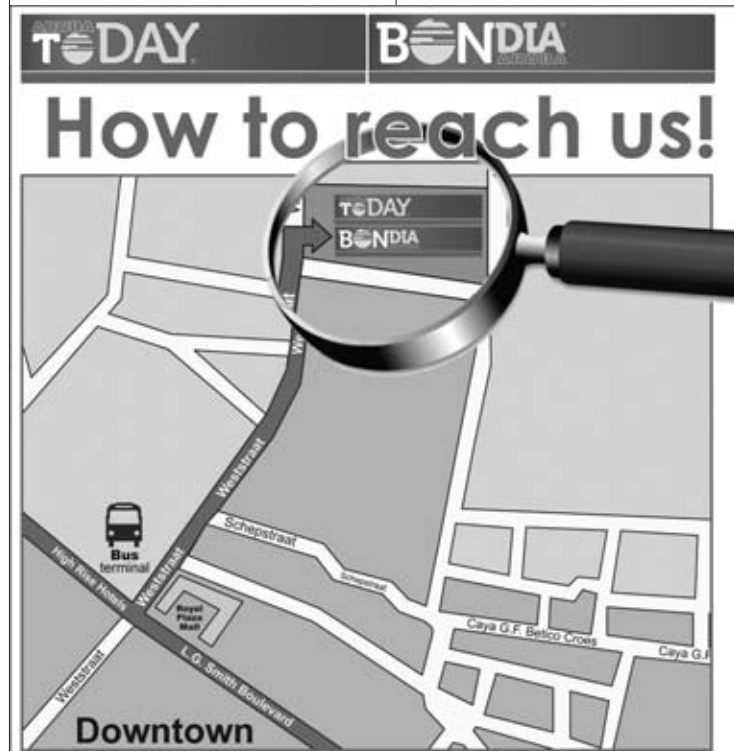
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Third of Himalayan glaciers can no longer be saved: study

By **BINAJ GURUBACHARYA**
Associated Press

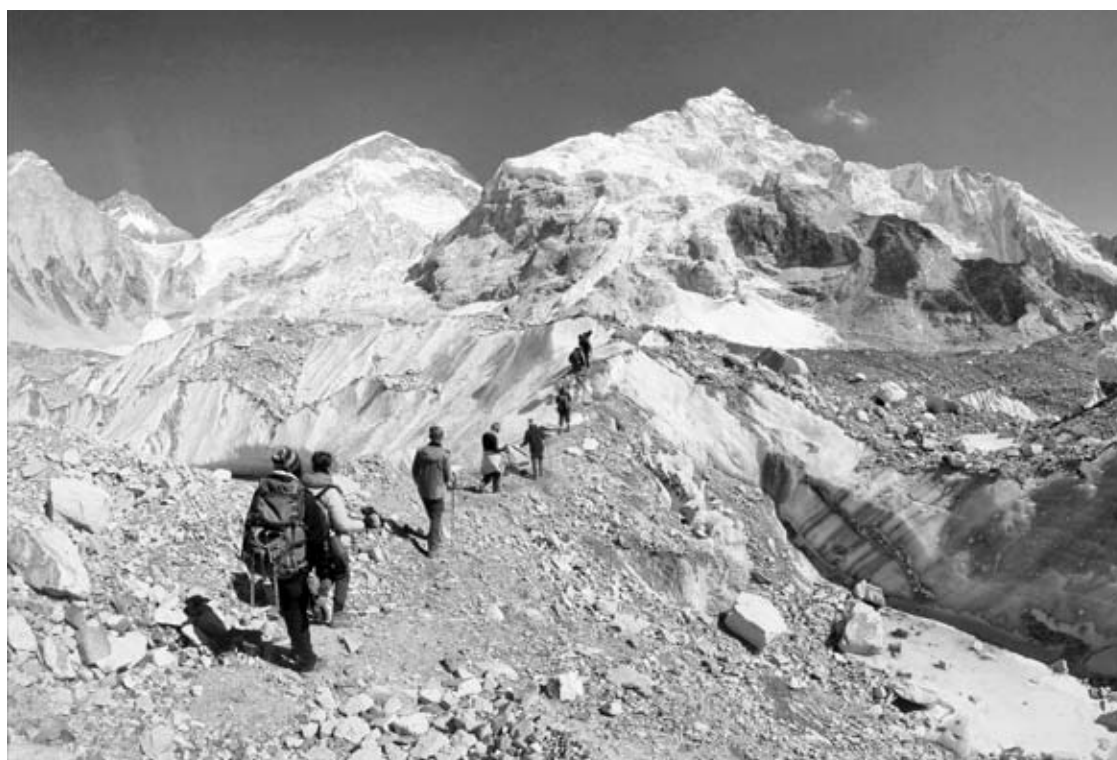
KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP)

— One-third of Himalayan glaciers will melt by the end of the century due to climate change, threatening water sources for 1.9 billion people, even if current efforts to reduce climate change succeed, an assessment warns.

If global efforts to curb climate change fail, the impact could be far worse: a loss of two-thirds of the region's glaciers by 2100, said the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment released Monday by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

"Global warming is on track to transform the frigid, glacier-covered mountain peaks of the Hindu Kush Himalayas cutting across eight countries to bare rocks in a little less than a century," said Philippus Wester of the center, who led the report.

The five-year study looked at the effects of climate change on a region that cuts across Asia through Afghanistan, Pakistan, In-



In this Monday, Feb. 22, 2016 file photo, trekkers pass through a glacier at the Mount Everest base camp, Nepal.

dia, Nepal, China, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The area, which includes the world's tallest mountain peaks, has glaciers that feed into river systems including the Indus, Ganges, Yangtze, Irrawaddy and Mekong.

The assessment said that the impact of the melting

could range from flooding from the increased runoff to increased air pollution from black carbon and dust deposited on the glaciers.

Saleemul Huq, director of the International Center for Climate Change and Development, an environmental research center in

Dhaka, described the findings of the report as "very alarming," especially for downstream nations such as Bangladesh.

"All the countries affected need to prioritize tackling this upcoming problem before it reaches crisis proportions," he said in an email. Huq was one of the

Associated Press

study's external reviewers. The study said that even if the most ambitious Paris climate accord goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century were met, more than a third of the region's glaciers will be lost. If the global rise in temperature were 2 C (3.6 F), two-thirds of Himalayan glaciers will melt, it said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement was a landmark moment in international diplomacy, bringing together governments with vastly different views to tackle global warming. It set a headline target of keeping average global temperatures from rising by more than 2 C, or 1.5 C if possible. According to a recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, emissions of the most abundant greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, would need to be reduced to a level the planet can absorb — known as net zero — by 2050 to keep global warming at 1.5 C as envisaged in the agreement. □

2018 was 4th warmest, but next 5 years could break records

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**

AP Science Writer

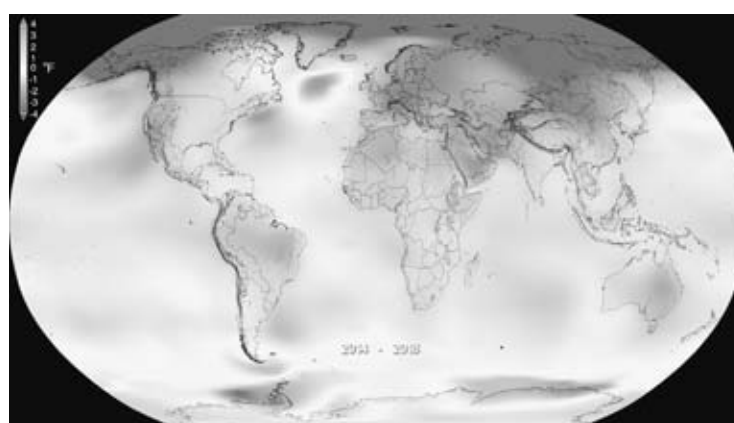
WASHINGTON (AP) — While 2018 was the fourth-warmest year on record, British meteorologists are predicting the next five years will be much hotter, maybe even record-breaking.

Two U.S. agencies, the United Kingdom Met Office and the World Meteorological Organization analyzed global temperatures in slightly different ways, but each came to the same conclusion Wednesday:

2018 was the fourth-warmest year on record behind 2016, 2015 and 2017.

The U.S. government's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said 2018's average temperature was 58.42 degrees (14.69 Celsius), which is 1.42 degrees (0.79 Celsius) warmer than the 20th century average. Much of Europe had its warmest years on record. Records go back to 1880.

NASA and NOAA climate scientists said even though



This map made available by NASA in February 2019 shows global surface temperature anomalies for 2014-2018.

Associated Press

2018 was a tad cooler than the three previous years that's mostly due to random weather variations.

"Never mind the little wiggles from year to year. The trend is going relentlessly up, and it will continue to do so," Potsdam Institute climate scientist Stefan Rahmstorf said in an email. "Those who live in denial of this fact are in denial of

physics." Outside scientists, such as Natalie Mahowald of Cornell University, said the forecast is consistent with what researchers know about warming and natural variability.

The obvious long-term trend of steady warming makes it easier to more accurately predict near future warming, said NASA chief climate scientist Gavin

Schmidt. The U.S. temperature in 2018 was the 14th warmest on average, said NOAA climate monitoring chief Deke Arndt.

Last year was also the third wettest on record in the U.S. Nine eastern states had their wettest years on record, "an exclamation point on a trend of big rain" in the age of climate change, Arndt said.

There were 14 weather and climate disasters that cost more than \$1 billion, for a total of \$91 billion, Arndt said. At least 247 people died in those disasters. That's the fourth-highest number of billion-dollar disasters and the fourth-highest dollar amount, taking inflation into account. The damage included Hurricane Michael's \$25 billion tally and \$24 billion each from Hurricane Florence and the western wildfires. □



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Michelle Williams returns to TV as dancer Gwen Verdon

By LYNN ELBER

BETH HARRIS

Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — A roundup of news from the Television Critics Association winter meeting, where TV networks and streaming services are presenting details on upcoming programs.

WILLIAMS RETURNS

Michelle Williams is returning to television for the first time in 16 years. She's playing dancer and actress Gwen Verdon, whose career aspirations were supplanted by her marriage to choreographer-director Bob Fosse.

Oscar winner Sam Rockwell plays Fosse in the eight-episode FX series "Fosse/Verdon," debuting April 9.

Williams' last TV work was the hit series "Dawson's Creek" that ended in 2003. She sees parallels with Verdon, who was a working mother like Williams.

Williams pointed out a long gap in Verdon's career while she stayed home to raise Nicole, her daughter with Fosse. Nicole Fosse is a creative consultant on the series.

Williams said Monday that such gaps are something all working mothers struggle with and called it "a very complicated dilemma."

FX VS. GOLIATH

Someone is standing up to television's Goliath, with a prominent competitor say-



Sam Rockwell, left, and Michelle Williams participate in the "Fosse/Verdon" panel during FX TCA Winter Press Tour on Monday, Feb. 4, 2019, in Pasadena, Calif.

ing Monday that Netflix is deceiving the public about what is a hit and what isn't. John Landgraf, the FX Networks chief executive who has frequently pointed out the glut of scripted TV, said Netflix is using cloudy measurements to claim increasing dominance among viewers. It's an approach he said reflects a worrisome Silicon Valley arrogance.

Applying long-used industry standards to Netflix, "their true batting average would be viewed as unimpressive," Landgraf said.

The streaming service has upended the TV industry with a gusher of programming beyond that of any

other outlet. This year, Netflix also realized its goal of earning a best-picture Oscar nomination, for the film "Roma."

But success doesn't necessarily stem from an "endless money cannon," as Landgraf described spending by what he called Silicon Valley's "monopolistic titans."

Netflix's claim that 40 million households globally watched the series "You" is suspect, Landgraf said, contending the U.S. figure would be only 8 million viewers if the industry's average-viewership standard was applied. The streaming service generally refuses

to release viewership numbers, emphasizing the subscriber growth it now pegs at more than 130 million worldwide, with nearly 60 million of those in the United States.

"By creating a myth that they have used data to find the magic bullet of guaranteed commercial success that has eluded everyone else since the creation of television, they have given the impression that the vast majority of shows on their platform is working ... and that they have or will soon have many more hits than anyone else," Landgraf said.

Netflix declined comment

Monday. The company said in an earnings letter it counts a viewer if they "substantially complete at least one episode."

Landgraf, who dismissed that measure as meaningless, said a program like "Stranger Things" is rightly cited by Netflix as an audience "home run" but called it an outlier.

FX is coming off a good year, with a wealth of Emmy and other awards for shows including "The Americans" and "The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story." Landgraf said he's optimistic about FX's future as Walt Disney Co. prepares to acquire 21st Century Fox, parent company of the channel.

"ATLANTA" DELAY

Donald Glover's comedy "Atlanta" will be back. Just not as soon as expected.

FX Networks CEO John Landgraf said Monday the series is behind schedule. The Georgia-based show was renewed for a third season in June and was supposed to return this year.

Landgraf said the show's writers are working on new episodes. Network spokesman John Solberg added that the show won't be back in time for Emmy Awards consideration this year.

"Atlanta" has won two Emmys and two Golden Globe awards. □

Audio-only book features writer's memories of Philip Roth

NEW YORK (AP) — An upcoming audio-only book will feature an author's memories of his complicated friendship with the late Philip Roth. James Atlas' "Remembering Roth" comes out March 1, the audio publisher and distributor Audible announced Tuesday. Atlas, whose books have ranged from the memoir "My Life in the Middle Ages" to an acclaimed Delmore Schwartz biography, will reflect on a relationship which began



In this Sept. 8, 2008, file photo, author Philip Roth poses for a photo in the offices of his publisher, Houghton Mifflin, in New York.

Associated Press

in the late 1970s and con-

tinued for decades. Roth died last spring. According to Audible, Bellow and Roth would take walks together in Manhattan, where the two had apartments on the same block, and read each other's work. (Atlas was among the few people Roth allowed to see a pre-publication edition of his novel "The Ghost Writer.") In a 1979 profile which ran in The New York Times, Atlas wrote that Roth was "Discordant, manic, ebullient," with "the verve of a Borscht-circuit comedian

and a genius for mimicry." Their friendship was strained by Atlas' biography of one of Roth's literary heroes, Saul Bellow, a project that Atlas has written was suggested by Roth. Published in 2000, the book was condemned by many as an overly negative portrait. Audible, which is owned by Amazon.com, is describing "Remembering Roth" as "Atlas's deeply personal tribute to Roth delivered in his own voice." □

Film on Breslin and Hamill shows perils of local journalism

By DAVID BAUDER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — HBO's new film on newspaper columnists Jimmy Breslin and Pete Hamill romanticizes an era in New York and journalism that feels like a long, long time ago.

The fact that it's very recent history makes "Breslin and Hamill: Deadline Artists" partly a tragedy.

The two men embodied a time when New York was a rollicking and complicated place, and each lived for the streets and stories of the little guys who made the city run. Every city had their own Breslins or Hamills, who made the powerful tremble or shake their fists. Their newspapers were required reading.

Toward the end of the documentary, which premieres Monday at 8 p.m. ET, filmmakers unspool a statistic that shocks. In 1988, the New York Daily News, the tabloid both Breslin and Hamill called home at times, had 400 reporters and editors. Thirty years later, that number was 45.

That, too, is a story repli-



This combination photo of images released by HBO shows journalists Jimmy Breslin, left, and Pete Hamill who are the focus of the HBO documentary "Breslin and Hamill: Deadline Artists."

cated across the country, where local journalism is in crisis. The media industry continues to implode, where this week alone more than 1,000 journalism jobs were lost in layoffs announced by Gannett, Verizon Media and BuzzFeed.

All of this was on the mind

of director Jonathan Alter, who started in 2015 to bring a camera to periodic get-togethers where Breslin and Hamill talked about the old times. Breslin died at age 88 in 2017. Hamill, fighting his own health issues, is 83 and lives in Brooklyn.

"I knew that an era was coming to a close," Alter said, "but I also knew that we didn't want to make a nostalgia film. We wanted it to be gritty and funny." Breslin made his name first, mostly through hustle. He broke from the pack to find memorable stories, notably following President John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963. Breslin found the man whose job was to dig Kennedy's grave and wrote about him, and interviewed Kennedy's emergency room doctor for a you-are-there account of the president's final minutes. "Jimmy was more like a hustler," Alter said. "As someone once described it, he was right at you all the time. Pete was more like a poet ... They both believed that the worst crime in the world was to be boring."

Their jobs often brought them to painful intersections of race and class — big stories where a seemingly mild-mannered white man, Bernhard Goetz, shot four black teen-agers in

1984 during an attempted subway mugging, and when five minorities were wrongfully accused of an attack on a white jogger in Central Park in 1989.

The columnists' willingness to listen to, and champion when necessary, people that society found easy to condemn often put them at odds with authorities. Breslin was not always a hero to a police force populated largely by fellow Irishmen. Director Spike Lee and others speak in the film about their importance to minority communities.

Hamill, who brushed off the broken hips and regular dialysis that keeps him close to home these days ("there are people in a lot worse shape than I'm in"), told The Associated Press what he and Breslin thought was necessary to cover a city of immigrants.

"We were able to explain the newcomers to the people who were here, and explain the city to the newcomers," he said. "I think that was a very important task that we took care of." To do that, he said, "you've got to go to the third floor loft and knock on the door."

There's an importance to the social fabric in having exceptionally talented people write about the

lives of normal folks, Alter said. It often seems like the working class is now missing from a modern New York. More likely, it's because few people with powerful platforms are writing about them.

It's striking to see the film catch a tenderness between two men who climbed to the top of a business fraught with egos and infighting. That's a testament to Hamill; the brawling Breslin would often write about people with whom he was feuding.

"He knew that I was not ever trying to hurt him or conquer him," Hamill said. "We didn't have a sense of rivalry. I was just trying to be the best Pete Hamill, which was hard enough."

Breslin fought through personal tragedies: he witnessed his mother try to commit suicide, and both his first wife and two daughters predeceased him. Despite a happy second marriage to a former New York City councilwoman, Ronnie Eldridge, the toll seemed evident in his final years. Ah, but the glory years? They had their fun. Hamill dated former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and actress Shirley MacLaine — at the same time. Breslin filmed a beer commercial and ran for New York City Council president on a ticket with writer and mayoral candidate Norman Mailer.

"There was this constant 'truth to power' quality to their work," Alter said. "Do we still have that? Yes, at the national level."

But not necessarily at the local level. And it's there, at the city halls and statehouses, where your pockets get picked, columnist Richard Cohen explains in the film. Hamill, who works with students at New York University, said he knows that there are talented young people who want to do the type of reporting that he and Breslin once did.

Whether they get that chance is a question that "Deadline Artists" can't answer. □

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'Flower Drum Song' author C.Y. Lee dead at 102

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — C.Y. Lee, whose novel "The Flower Drum Song" became a best seller and the basis for a popular stage musical and Oscar-nominated film despite mixed critical reactions and concerns about stereotypes, has died at age 102. Lee's son, Jay Lee, told The Associated Press that his father died Nov. 8 in Los Angeles. The family decided at the time not to make his death public.

"The Flower Drum Song," a story of generational conflict set in San Francisco's Chinatown, came out in 1957, and quickly became a popular read. The New York Times' Idwal Jones praised Lee's "objective eye," but also faulted the book for its absence of "deeper notes" and its affinity for "slang and sex" and "popular taste." (The author would later acknowledge he wanted to reach a large audience). Lee's debut novel attracted the attention of screenwriter Joseph Fields and composers Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Their musical adaptation, originally directed by Gene Kelly, ran on Broadway from 1958-60 and was revived in 2002, with a book



This Sept. 28, 2002 file photo shows author C.Y. Lee in New York. Lee, 102, the author of the best-selling "The Flower Drum Song" died on Nov. 8 in Los Angeles.

by "M. Butterfly" playwright David Henry Hwang. A 1961 film version, among the first major Hollywood productions to feature an Asian cast, received five Academy Award nominations despite being called by The New Yorker an "elaborate fraud" and a showcase for crude stereotypes.

Lee has since been praised as among the first Asian novelists to break through commercially in the U.S. and Hwang is among those

who thought the book underrated. "Flower Drum Song" was out of print at the time Hwang worked on the Broadway revival and he had to track it down from a Seattle book seller. "I thought, 'Oh, it's such a shame this author and this book have been lost, particularly the bittersweet tone of the novel,'" Hwang told the AP in 2001.

"C.Y.'s book is complicated in terms of texture about what it means to be

an American — the things you gain and the things you lose — but it ultimately affirms the value of this social experience."

A native of China who emigrated to the U.S. during World War II, Chin Yang Lee wrote several other novels, including "China Saga" and "Gate of Rage," based on pro-democracy protests in 1989 centered on Tiananmen Square.

He spent more than a year writing "Flower Drum

Song," and at the time was renting a small apartment above a Filipino nightclub in San Francisco. He was employed at the time by a Chinese-language newspaper, for which he wrote stories for elderly readers. For his novel, he drew upon his observations about the difference between older immigrants and their more assimilated children.

"In Chinatown, I knew everything that was going on," he told the AP in 2002. "Out of that I created characters, using everybody including my own family and my friends, plus a lot of invention from the air."

Lee struggled to find a publisher. After more than a dozen rejections, he was warned by his agent that he might have to "think of another profession."

"But then the novel landed at the sick bed of an 80-year-old gentleman, who was a reader for a highbrow publishing house (Farrar, Straus)," Lee told the AP. "He was quite ill, but he read it. He didn't have the energy to write a two- or three-page critique. He wrote only two words — 'Read this' — and died."

"Without those two words, the novel would have never been published." □

Associated Press

Milwaukee museum features thousands of bobbleheads

By CARRIE ANTLINGER

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — A new museum in Milwaukee may well hold the largest collection of bobbleheads anyone has ever seen, displaying more than 6,500 figures of athletes, mascots, celebrities, animals, cartoon characters, politicians and more.

The National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum recently opened and was the brainchild of friends Phil Sklar and Brad Novak, who started collecting the figures 16 years ago.

"We've put everything into this," Sklar said.

They decided on a museum and bobblehead-creating business about four



In this Jan. 8, 2019 photo, National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum founders Brad Novak, left, and Phil Sklar, stand near the museum entrance at the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

years ago, after quitting their corporate finance (Sklar) and retail sales (Novak) jobs. Since then, they have been making bob-

bleheads to earn money, collecting bobbleheads from thrift stores and private donors, finding a location and all the other

things that go with creating a museum.

They have collected more than 10,000 bobbleheads, including a life-size bobblehead; a Pat Hughes bobblehead calling the World Series title for the Cubs; bobbleheads of characters from "The Wizard of Oz" and the "Star Wars" franchise; and the first football and baseball bobbleheads from the early 1960s. They even have one of Donald Trump from "The Apprentice" that says "You're fired" upon the push of a button. Some of the figures will be on rotation or part of special exhibits — like, say, if a certain sports team is in town.

The museum also includes information about the making of bobbleheads and the people they represent. Admission is \$5.

"I think that passion comes from the fun aspect and seeing the reaction people get when they see the bobbleheads," Sklar said. Sklar and Novak are in the process of having the collection certified as the world's largest by the Guinness Book of World Records.

The current record is 2,396 bobbleheads, held by Phil Darling, a 40-year-old hardware engineer from Richmond, Ontario. He's acquired an additional 500 since the certification in 2015. □

Telemedicine's challenge: Getting patients to click the app

By **TOM MURPHY**
Associated Press

Walmart workers can now see a doctor for only \$4. The catch? It has to be a virtual visit.

The retail giant recently rolled back the \$40 price on telemedicine, becoming the latest big company to nudge employees toward a high-tech way to get diagnosed and treated remotely.

But patients have been slow to embrace virtual care. Eighty percent of mid-size and large U.S. companies offered telemedicine services to their workers last year, up from 18 percent in 2014, according to the consultant Mercer. Only 8 percent of eligible employees used telemedicine at least once in 2017, most recent figures show.

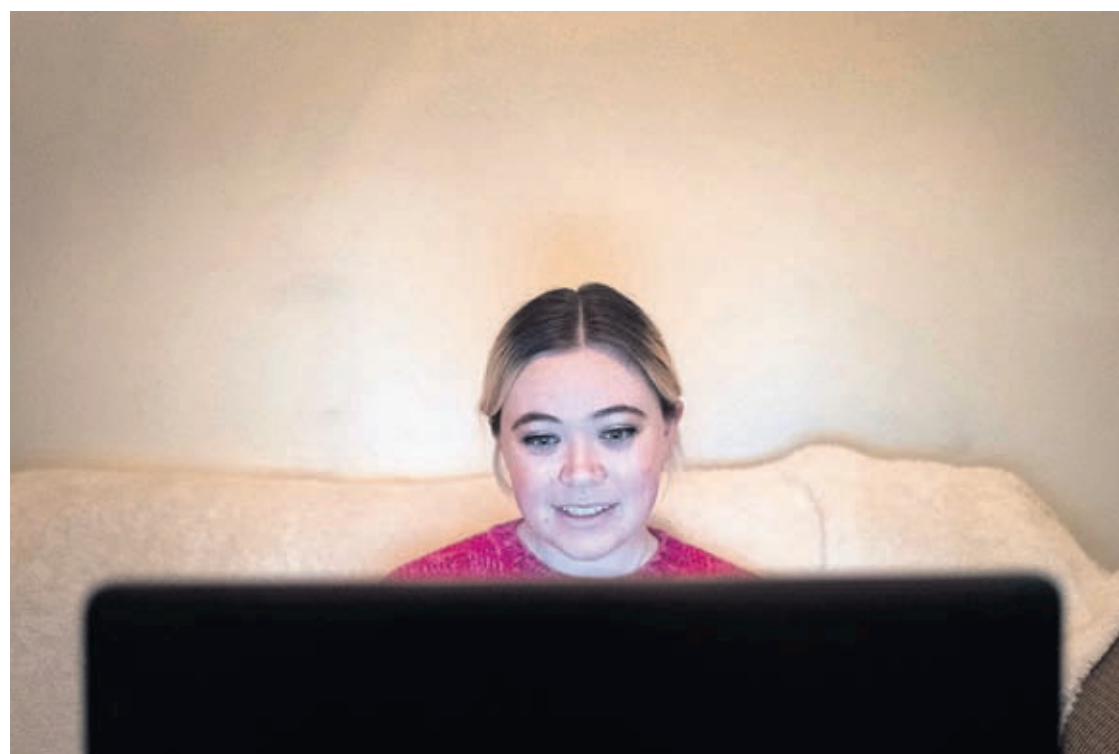
"There's an awful lot of effort right now focused on educating the consumer that there's a better way," said Jason Gorevic, CEO of telemedicine provider Teladoc Health.

Widespread smartphone use, looser regulations and employer enthusiasm are helping to expand access to telemedicine, where patients interact with doctors and nurses from afar, often through a secure video connection. Supporters say virtual visits make it easier for patients to see a therapist or quickly find help for ailments that aren't emergencies. But many still fall back to going to the doctor's office when they're sick.

Health care experts have long said that changing behavior can be hard. In telemedicine's case, patients might learn about it from their employer and then forget about it by the time they need care a few months later. Plus emotions can complicate health care decisions, said Mercer's Beth Umland.

"My little kid is sick, I want them to have the best of care right away, and for some people that might not register as a telemedicine call," she said.

Some patients, especially older ones, also just prefer



In this Jan. 14, 2019 photo, Caitlin Powers sits in the living room of her Brooklyn apartment in New York, and has a telemedicine video conference with physician, Dr. Deborah Mulligan.

Associated Press

an in-person visit.

"Going to the doctor's office is a big event in their life and something they look forward to," said Geoffrey Boyce, CEO of InSight Telepsychiatry, which provides virtual mental health services.

Tom Hill is among that crowd. The 66-year-old from Mooresville, Indiana, said he's never used telemedicine and has no plans to.

"I believe in a handshake and looking a guy in the eye," said Hill during a recent shopping break at a downtown Indianapolis

mall. "I don't buy anything online either."

But the practice does gain fans once patients try it.

Julie Guerrero-Goetsch has opened her MDLive telemedicine app several times since first using it about a year ago to get help for a sinus infection.

The Fallon, Nevada, resident was skeptical, but she didn't have time to go in person. MDLive connected her to a doctor soon after she opened the app. She said he started asking questions about symptoms "just as if I was sitting in a doctor's office" and prescribed

an antibiotic.

Caitlin Powers tried telemedicine recently after hearing about it through a friend. The Columbia University graduate student was feeling stuffed up and worried she might be coming down with the flu. She said her appointment started on time, lasted 10 minutes, and she spoke by video with a doctor in Florida while never leaving her Brooklyn apartment.

"As a student, I don't really have time to spend three hours waiting to see a doctor, and this was so easy," she said.



In this Jan. 14, 2019 photo, Caitlin Powers sits in the living room of her Brooklyn apartment in New York, and has a telemedicine video conference with physician, Dr. Deborah Mulligan.

Associated Press

Doctors have used telemedicine for years to monitor patients or reach those in remote locations.

Now more employers are encouraging people covered under their health plans to seek care virtually for several reasons.

Telemedicine can reduce time spent away from the job, and it also can cost half the price of a doctor's visit, which might top \$100 for someone with a high-deductible plan. However, those savings can be negated if telemedicine's convenience causes people to overuse it.

Walmart said it cut the cost for virtual visits to give another care option to the more than one million people covered by its health benefits.

Employers aren't the only ones pushing the technology. The drugstore chains CVS Health and Walgreens are promoting apps that let customers connect to doctors.

Some insurers like Oscar Health are offering it for free to customers as a first line of treatment.

Boyce said people also like the anonymity of a virtual visit.

Mental health visits were the most common use of telemedicine by patients until primary care overtook that specialty a few years ago, Harvard's Dr. Ateev Mehrotra and other researchers found in a recent study of claims data from a large insurer. Research firm IHS Markit estimates that telemedicine visits in the U.S. will soar from 23 million in 2017 to 105 million by 2022. But even then, they will probably amount to only about one out of every 10 doctor visits, said senior analyst Roheen Roashan.

MDLive CEO Rich Berner said telemedicine is like the digital video recorder TiVo, which took a while to catch on with viewers. "People were so used to doing things the other way that it just took a little while to kind of really go mainstream," he said. "But when it did, it went mainstream big-time." □